

THE FAIRY HOUSEKEEPERS

NORMA BRIGHT CARSON





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HAZELTINE FEWSMITH

THE
FAIRY
HOUSEKEEPERS





WHEN THE FAIRIES FISHING GO.

THE FAIRY HOUSEKEEPERS

BY

NORMA
BRIGHT
CARSON

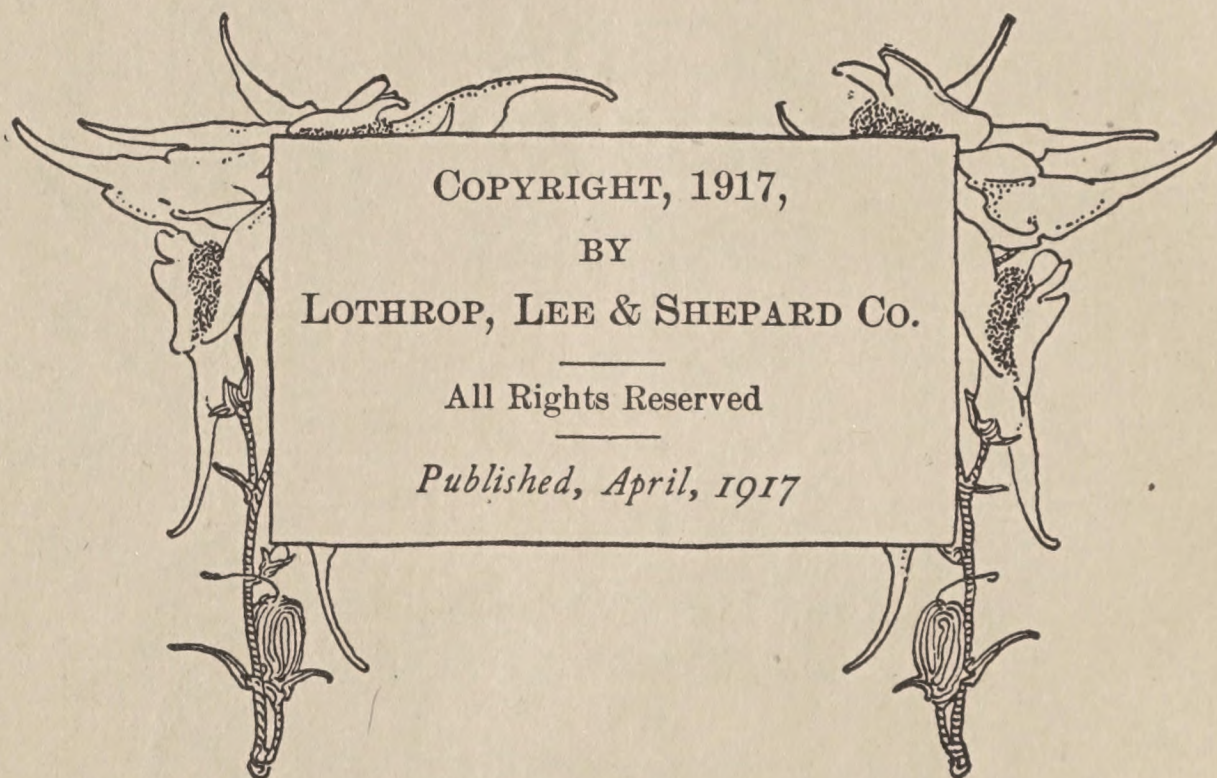


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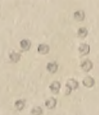
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Published, April, 1917



MAY -2 1917

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no 1.



TO MY DAUGHTER
DOROTHY
BRIGHT
CARSON

INTRODUCTION



EVERY mother of children is asked to “tell me a story, please,” and every mother wants to find some entertaining little tales that will interest and will at the same time add something to the mental store of her babies. THE FAIRY HOUSEKEEPERS is not all fancy; under the tissue of each tale lies a framework of fact. The interested mother can make these pleasant fairy people very real to her child, and when the boy or girl has learned to know the fairies, he or she will also

INTRODUCTION

know many things about the workings of Nature that will prove valuable in years to come.

The child who is reared to live near to Nature and to appreciate natural beauty will possess a treasure of the mind and heart that no circumstances of life can quite take away.

These little tales are about the fairies who help good Mother Nature to keep house. The house is the big, wide world, and Nature and the fairies make it green with grass, fragrant with flowers, and bright with the colors of woods and gardens. It is a wonderful house, in which boys and girls may live, and may learn to love the miracles that bring the spring, the summer, the autumn and the winter.



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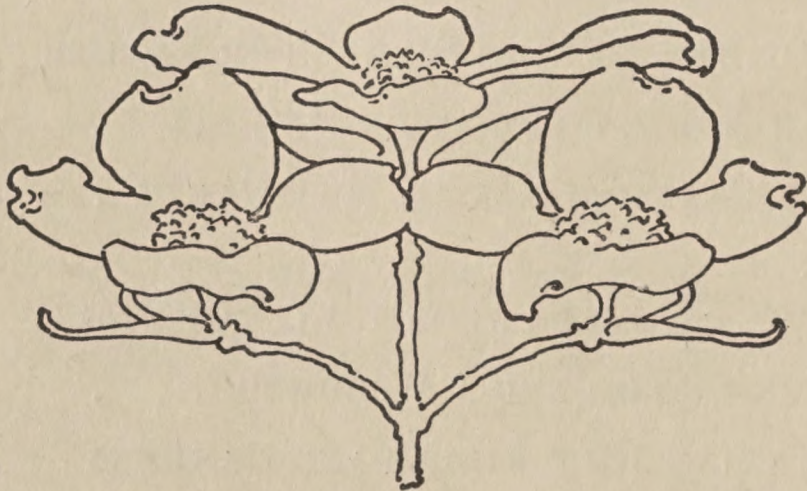
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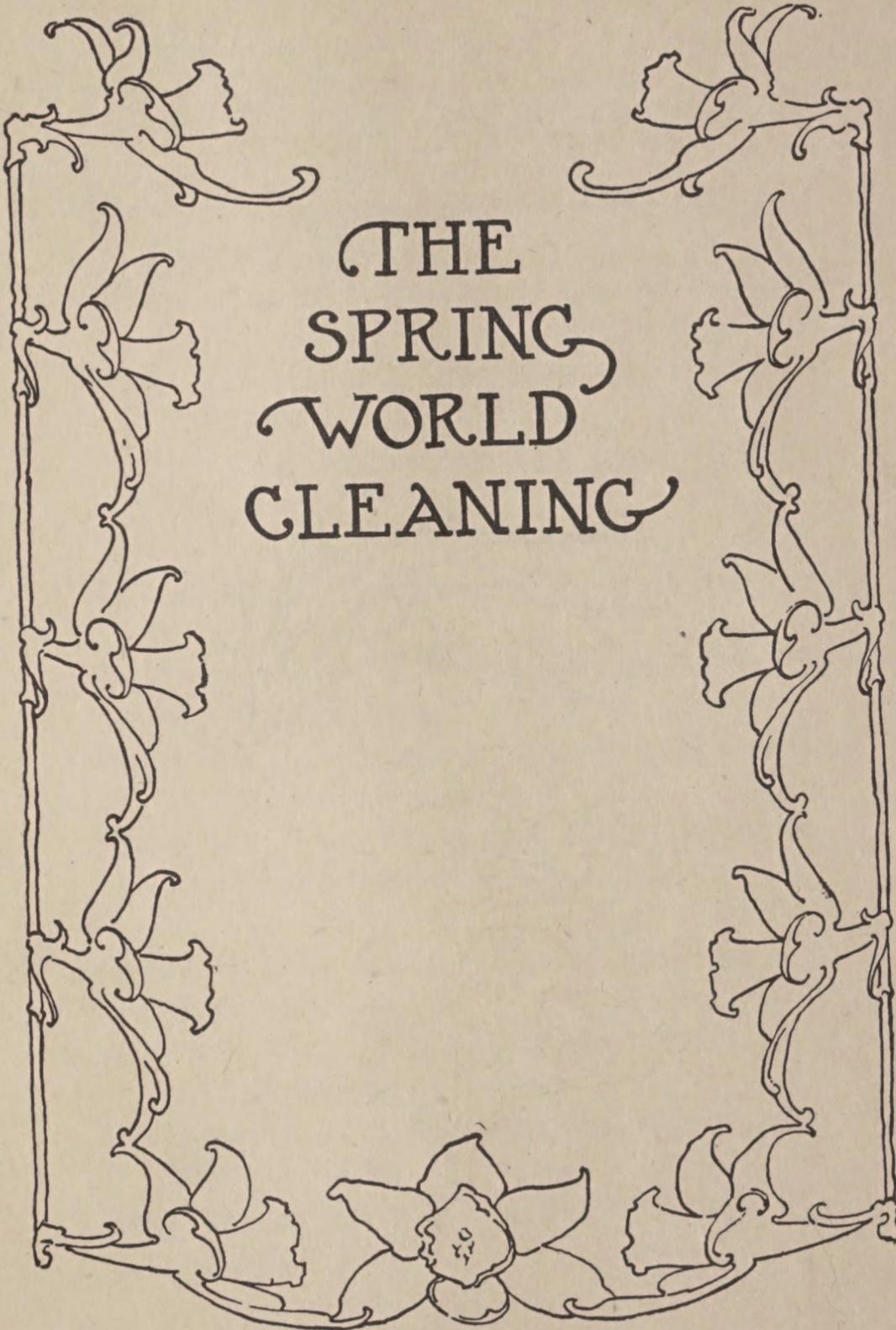
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A decorative border made of stylized flowers and leaves, arranged in a rectangular frame with rounded corners. The flowers are simple line drawings with five petals and long, curved stems. The leaves are also stylized, with pointed tips and curved edges. The border is drawn in a single line, creating a delicate and elegant frame around the central text.

THE
SPRING
WORLD
CLEANING



FAIRY NEEDLES

There's a thousand busy workers in the forest
glades to-day,
Mother Nature has commanded all the fairy
folk away
From their winter jubilation in the caves
beneath the hills,
For 'tis time to dress the trees up and give the
woods their frills.

So each fairy takes her needle—pine it is, and
sharp and long—
And sits down to do her sewing, while she
sings a little song.
Don't you hear the needles clicking, as the
hours go swiftly by?
Don't you hear the voices humming as the
breezes linger nigh?

Oh, it's a busy world in Springtime, when the
fairy needles ply,
And the stitches into garments for the leaves
and flowers fly.
What a host of Easter bonnets must the fairy
sewers make,
What innumerable stitches must the long pine
needles take!





MOTHER NATURE WAKES THE FAIRIES—:

THERE came a day when the good, kind Mother Earth, whose other name is Madame Nature, looked up and greeted the Sun with a cheerful nod and a smile.

“Good-morning, Master Sun,” she said brightly. “Pray, tell me, do you not think that it is almost time for Spring to be here?”

At that the old Sun wrinkled up his

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shining face and burst into loud, hearty laughter.

“Why, sure enough, good Mother Earth,” he answered. “You remind me that only yesterday I peeped into the woods down yonder, and there I saw a merry face peering out at me from the hole in the old oak-tree beside the river. Just for fun I sent a big, bright beam to shine over the oak, and then I heard a little giggle, as the face went back into the tree. I just wonder, now, if that could have been our little Miss Spring?”

“It might have been one of her wood-nymphs,” Madame Nature suggested. “At any rate, if you intend to go on shining as you shine to-day I think I had better hunt up that naughty Spring, or she will forget her duties and go on napping the days away in her comfortable tree-trunk. As for those

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lazy fairies, I think they have slept long enough anyway. It must be almost six months since the last of the flower fairies cuddled up under the autumn leaves down in the wood dells; while the field fairies have had a fine rest under my warm winter ground blankets. When I walked through the woods to-day I saw a thousand buds full to bursting, but if I do not give them each a tap, the fairies inside of them will go on dreaming hour after hour, and never remember at all that the world is waiting for the flowers to open. I wish, Mr. Sun, that you would send some sharp, hot rays down among those violet leaves in the glade below here. And yes, some broad beams poured over the tree-boughs and among the dead leaves in the forest would be a great help to me; for they would make my little house-

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keeper people sit up and rub their sleepy eyes awake."

With that Mother Earth laughed again good-naturedly, for really, you know, this kind, great nature mother truly loves her fairy children, just as your mother loves you. For the fairies are Nature's children, and there are thousands and thousands and thousands of them. There are flower fairies ; grass fairies and tree fairies ; water fairies and sand fairies ; wind fairies and rain fairies ; snow fairies and cave fairies. And all of them are the little housekeeper fairies who help Madame Nature to make the world wonderful, and to bring the spring and the summer, the autumn and the winter.

Sometimes, like all children, the fairies try the patience of their good Earth Mother. For they lie asleep in flower cups when they

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should be painting leaves green and petals pink and purple. Or they go fishing among the pond-lilies when they ought to be filling the seed-pods; or they play hide-and-seek by the brook when they are wanted to gather up the dead leaves on the floor of the forest.

However, Mother Earth knows how to manage her housekeeper people. Now and then she has to punish them, but for the most part they obey her will.

Madame Nature lives in a great cave under a high hill. She has four mighty sons—the North, the South, the East and the West Winds. For days and days she sits by a huge fire in her cave and spins, while her children do the work out in the world. But when one season goes and another is ready to come, she leaves her home, and is carried

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hither and thither in the great airships of her wind sons. Then, everywhere she goes, she shows the fairy people how to perform miracles with flowers and leaves and ice and snow.



“For Days and Days Nature Sits by a Huge Fire
and Spins.”

Once a year Madame Nature wakes the flower and the tree fairies, so that they can clean and decorate the world-house for a great event. This is the crowning of little Queen

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Spring. Each year this pretty maiden, dressed in palest green and wreathed with flowers, comes out from her comfortable winter quarters and dances through the world, making what we know as the Springtime. Spring is always young, and so the world she lives in must be young as well, and must be filled with gay colors and with bright sunlight.

Therefore, Mother Earth and her kind friend, Master Sun, watch for the day when everything seems ready for the Spring. And now the time had arrived, and so Mother Nature has hunted up the Sun and has asked for his help.

“ I’ll have some yellow fire that will scare those lazy children,” the Sun promised. With that he sent a little ball of fire bursting through the air. It struck the great oak-tree down by the river and there followed a sharp

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scream. After that came the sound of dancing feet. At the big hole in the tree's trunk a face appeared ; then a tall door in the tree's trunk flew open. Out flocked four of the prettiest girls you have even seen. Their dark hair waved about their heads ; their dresses were short smocks of woven brown leaves ; their arms and legs were bare, and they did not walk—they danced. Mother Nature came slowly and smilingly down the slope. Each one greeted her with a warm kiss and a hug.

“Naughty nymphs,” she said reproachfully. “What have you done with Spring?”

At that they laughed and danced still more gaily. “Shut your eyes, Mother dear,” they commanded. “Give us your hand—now, here!” Then they sprang away, and Madame Nature found herself holding a soft little hand in her own strong, brown one.

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“Mother Nature Found Herself Holding a Soft,
Little Hand.”

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When she opened her eyes, there stood Miss Spring, dainty and sweet as a tall, white flower; all around the tree danced tiny fairies, their wings shimmering with dewdrops, and their faces merry with delight over the surprise they had given Mother Nature.

“Well, well,” the good Mother laughed. “And so you did think to astonish me! However, I am ready for work; the question is, are you?”

“Yes, yes,” they cried, all eagerness to run away and start. But first, Nature had to see that Spring was all right. She looked her over, felt her thin dress of leaf-lace, and tucked the cluster of spring buds more securely in her hair. Then she ordered the fairies to follow, and she and Spring, hand in hand, with the wood-nymphs behind them, marched away from the oak-tree and started

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out through the forest. Everywhere from under their feet dead leaves stirred lightly, and tiny fairies sat up or stood before them suddenly, rubbing their eyes with their fists and looking for all the world like sleepy children who have been waked without warning. But one and all they scrambled up, smoothed their crumpled wings and washed their faces in the tiny pools of dawn dew.

Then Spring and Mother Nature bent to the Earth and touched it here and there with their fingers. And behold ! grass sprang up, fresh and green, and tiny hidden buds unfolded into soft, emerald-colored leaves. And out of each leaf there stepped a dainty fairy person, sometimes a golden-haired little girl fairy, with wings like a butterfly ; sometimes a small brown elf with a peaked cap formed of a fresh leaf : one and all they greeted

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Mother Nature and sweet Spring with a happy laugh. One and all they joined in the procession that wandered over the hills and through the valleys, singing gay little snatches of song and touching everything they came upon with new life, gathering, as they went, a whole host of other fairies, whose sleep has been ended by the joyous music of this happy throng.





AN APRIL CORONATION DAY

NOW I know that you are going to ask,
“What is a coronation day?” Well, a
coronation day is a crowning day. There
must, of course, be a king or a queen to
make a crowning day possible, and, in the
story we are going to tell, the queen is the

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beautiful young girl who came out of the big tree-trunk, and whose name is Spring.

A crowning day takes a great deal of preparation. For the crowning of Spring, Mother Nature has to make use of all the little fairy housekeepers she can find in the fields and the woods. What a sweeping and a scrubbing and a washing and a polishing there must be in the fine old world before Mother Nature is satisfied to have Spring put on her crown and become a queen. Queens live in palaces, you know, and Mother Nature's great, beautiful world is Queen Spring's palace. So, the palace must be bright and clean, and filled with gay colors and fragrance, and with the songs of many birds. For Queen Spring is young, and she must be made merry and kept happy. If things

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go wrong she is likely to pout and frown and even shed tears ; and then the people in the world will say, "Oh, that naughty Spring ! She's crying again, and now we shall have spring rains, and our frocks will get wet and mussy !"

Down in the woods, each morning during the days that Nature is preparing for the crowning of Spring, the boy and girl fairies roll out of their light leaf-blankets with the first sun-ray. With gay laughter they hunt for the pools of dew that lie in the brown acorn cups under the oak-trees, and wash their hands and their faces in the cool, refreshing water. Then they comb out their shining hair with their brushes of pine needles, and dry their moist wings in the young sunshine. Breakfast among fairies is really a very simple matter, for fairies

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are tiny and cannot eat much at a time. Often enough the morning meal means no more than a tiny drink of honey-sweet, warmly fragrant dew sipped from the heart of a violet, or a few juicy, sticky horse-chestnut leaf-buds, which, I am told, Spring fairies find wonderfully good.

Breakfast over, one and all the fairies go to work. With tiny brushes they paint the leaves—which are very young and tender—a bright, beautiful green. They touch up the first flowers with bits of color; some of the flowers they actually make, from stray snatches of cloud-drift and drops of sunshine. Under the trees they lay thick rugs of moss, and then they wash away the dust that the naughty winds have spilled over the branches, until each branch is sweet and clean and shiny. Sometimes there is so

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much dust that the tiny fairies just have to sit down and sigh over it in despair.

“What shall I do with those maple-trees there?” Johnny Elf asks May Fairy.



“Johnny Elf Picks Up a Pine-Cone Receiver.”

“Ask Mother Nature to have the Rain send a shower along,” is May Fairy’s suggestion. So Johnny Elf scrambles into a tree-trunk and picks up a pine-cone receiver that belongs to the Fairy-land tele-

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phone system. Then he talks to Hill Cave 1-0-5.

"It's all right," he reports to May Fairy, when he returns to the grassy slope where she is busy tying long tendrils to a wild honeysuckle vine. "As soon as Rain can be found, Mother Nature will send him." And sure enough, in a very little while, during which time Johnny Elf has cut out at least a hundred leaf patterns, they hear the soft "sough" of the Wind's cloud-ship, and soon the gentle patter of the Rain's drops tells that a baby spring shower is helping along the housecleaning work.

Hour by hour now the trees grow greener and the grass grows thicker. The bluebells, given by the sky, are set by fairy fingers in the deep moss-rugs beside the brooklets; now the lilies-of-the-valley, bits of white cloud

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dipped in star-shine, have been fixed on slender stems among groups of highly-polished, carefully-designed dark leaves.

In the gardens the new grass carpets have been laid, tacked down all round with plants placed there by fairy fingers. Here and there the sun has dropped a ball of gold-shine and lo! a crocus rises up to smile away the winter's dullness. Then a tulip, fashioned in a sunset, bows before a stately iris late from Rainbow-Land, and a perky little Robin, passing, calls a greeting to the flowers as he hops along the roadway bearing messages to the different groups of fairy workers from sweet Spring herself.

Once again the good Earth Mother leaves her cave and calls up to the Sun.

"And what of a fair day to-morrow?" she asks smiling.

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“Fair it shall be,” the old Sun answers. “My blessing in a million sun-rays on the day! And may the Maiden Spring reign well and happily,” he finishes, like the courtly old gentleman that he is.

Thereupon Mother Nature calls her rude sons, the East and the North Winds, and bids them begone to the mountains for a holiday. For these two sons are likely to start some new and noisy game just at the time when Nature wants the world all quiet.

Early in the morning of the great day that is to see Spring crowned, Mother Nature puts on a new leaf dress of delicate green, fastens a great bunch of dewy violets at her waist, and standing on the hill above her cave, calls for the South Wind to bring his chariot, for she is ready to go for Spring.

The chariot of the South Wind is really a

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great airship. Mother Nature is carried in it to the dell beside the river, where Spring is being robed for her coronation. Here are fairies and wood-nymphs, and birds and squirrels and rabbits, and other small creatures of the forest. Every one is clean, and dressed in his and her best. The fairies' wings shine in the sunlight as if covered with jewels ; their heads are crowned with wreaths of young, bright flowers.

Spring herself is very beautiful in a gown of fresh young cherry blossoms, with green leaves tucked in among the flowers, and a big and gorgeous butterfly perched on her shoulder. She greets Mother Nature lovingly, and the good Mother is very tender with this her youngest child.

Now the procession is ready to start. On a chariot of leaves and flowers rests the big

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crown of early roses made especially for the occasion, and a dozen robins, harnessed to the car by long vines, are ready to convey the crown to the bower which has been built for



“Now the Procession is Ready to Start.”

the coronation ceremony. A tiny herald, in brilliant green, climbs up into a great Jack-in-the-Pulpit, and announces that the line of procession will now move. So with singing

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and dancing the happy band makes its way through the woods to an open space, where a great dogwood-tree in full bloom throws its heavy branches, gleaming with white blossoms, low over a dead tree stump, which the fairies have draped with fresh flowers. On this low throne Spring seats herself, and two small pages take the crown from its coach and place it on Spring's fair head. Then Mother Nature gives Spring a beautiful wand, at the tip of which is a great flower. In Fairy-land they say that at night this flower becomes a star, and shines brilliantly wherever Spring may be. At any rate, the wand is the sign that Spring is now Queen in the world, and that for a few months whatever she wishes shall be done. Now the fairies will have a gay time, for Spring loves to dance and to sing and to have dancing and singing

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around her. She sends her faithful robin courtiers to the Southland and has them bid all the birds to her kingdom. She lays her fair lips on the tiny nests where the butterflies are all sleeping, and gives them dreams that add to their beauty when presently they come out of their tiny houses and begin their work in the world.

And wherever Spring goes she is followed by a big beautiful bluebird, who stands for happiness, and whose home is said to be in the deep blue sky itself.

It is, however, a tired little Spring who rests on her moss bed in the tree valley when at last night comes. Mother Nature has gone back to her cave, and the Sun, with a last kind smile, has departed beyond the hills. The nymphs take down the yellow hair of the new queen and brush it with loving hands.

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"It has been a great day," the Oak-Tree Nymph says, with a happy sigh.

And Queen Spring murmurs dreamily, "A beautiful day. What a wonderful world it is, after all."

"Listen," says the Elm-Tree Nymph. "The fairies are singing. They are calling to the moon to open her window. It is their sere-nade."

And sure enough, the fairies, enjoying to the full their holiday, have sung the Lady Moon awake, and are inviting her to show her fair face at the window of her home in the night sky.

"Congratulations, little Spring," the Lady Moon cries gayly.

"Congratulations," the stars chorus. And Spring smiles happily up at the sky. But the fairies go on dancing. They dance till

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the dawn raises the shades in the night house,
and Mother Nature sends word that the
world will rest for a day. But the little fairy
housekeepers have surely earned a vacation,
if only a short one, for without them the
world would never have been so beautifully
ready for the coronation of Spring.





QUEEN SPRING had moved from the heart of the woods to the midst of a fine, old apple orchard. Here the trees were in full bloom, for Mother Nature had been having the fairy housekeepers work on the tender buds until they had turned them one and all into beautiful blossoms, with soft, silky petals, and hearts into which the kind old Sun had dropped gold-dust.

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It was May in the world, and as Spring sat there, she heard the birds singing all around, while in a field not far distant the cattle were lowing. The day was warm but mild, for the gentle South Wind had come up from the wind cave with a message for the Queen. Mother Nature sent word that she must have all the housekeeper fairies away from the orchard, because they were needed out in the fields, where a million daisies and almost as many buttercups must be made.

Even as the South Wind sighed his message into Queen Spring's ear, there came flying across the sky a beautiful big bird. It came from the Southland, and it brought in its beak a folded palm-leaf, on which was a message for Spring.

The bird lighted on the ground beside the Queen, and the little lady took the message

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and read it. Then her fair face flushed like a new rose-leaf, and she called for the Oak-Tree Nymph to come out to her. When the nymph arrived Queen Spring told her the news.

“King Summer sends his greetings. He is travelling up toward my kingdom as fast as his cloud-fleet will bring him. He says,” and here she smiled a little, “that he has heard of the beautiful Spring, and that he comes with fruit and flowers to lay at the feet of this fair Queen. I wonder,” she sighed, “if he is very handsome.”

“Mother Nature ought to know,” answered the practical Oak-Tree Nymph. “For myself, I wish that he had waited a little longer. There are so many roses to be made, and such a host of apples and cherries to be gotten ready, that I do not see how the little fairies

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can possibly be done in time for the holiday they will have if King Summer comes here to stay."

"Well," said the Spring, "I asked Mother Nature not so long ago and she told me that we would have to get ready for Summer whenever he sent word that he would come. So I've decided to have a May party. I'll write him at once and send the message, and then I'll ask Mother Nature to let us have the big glade down by the waterfall to have the party in."

"The one they call the Bridal Falls?" the nymph asked mischievously. And Queen Spring blushed.

All of which means that I must tell you a secret. But you mustn't tell any one that I've told it.

You see, King Summer comes to marry

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Queen Spring, and now we shall have a romance that will set up a great stir in Fairyland. For there will be a wedding, and if it takes great preparation for a coronation, what preparation must it take for a wedding!

Spring sent her message to the Summer King, and then she danced over the hills and down through the valley till she came to Mother Nature's cave. That dear lady kissed her very fondly, said how sweet she looked in her new dress of wild roses and lilac blossoms and leaves, and wanted to know how everything went in the apple-orchard.

Then Spring told about the Summer, and Mother Nature became very much interested. Of course there must be a big party. The fairies must hurry with the daisies and buttercups and make all the cherries as quickly as could be. And the floor of the glade

THE FAIRY HOUSEKEEPERS

must be piled up with May apples, and the banks of the stream be brushed up with fresh moss, and the great old trees that hang their long branches over the waterfall must have their leaves trimmed, for the glade would be just the place for a big dance, and the fairies could fish in the stream for the Summer King's breakfast.

Then Mother Nature set her telephone working. Soon the foreman of the daisy field band, and the leader of the buttercup makers, and the elf commanding the dusting crew, and the little fairy who knew all about boat making and fishing, stood before the good Mother there in her cave.

One by one they were told what to do.

The daisy makers must go to the fields around the glade and cover the ground thick with daisies. There must be white daisies

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with yellow hearts, and gold daisies with great black centers—"you must make a daisy carpet for King Summer's feet, and you must make enough extra daisies to give to the garland-makers for wreaths for every fairy who comes to the party."

The buttercup-maker was told to take his fairies away from the fields where they were working and use up what was left of the materials for the buttercups in providing for the yellow centers of the daisies to be made.

The dusters were to go to the glade and spread fresh moss and trim the undergrowth, while the boat-maker was to get ready immediately a thousand small boats for floating on the stream—"you may have to rob the pond-lilies in the lake by the great house of some of their petals for boats," Mother Nature finished.

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And so it was that when the great ship from the South, carried high on the wings of a host of bright birds, came sailing gently down upon the daisy field, Queen Spring, in a gown of the palest of pink rose-petals, and surrounded by a great band of fairies of all kinds—flower fairies and leaf fairies and wind fairies and wood gnomes—was waiting to receive the beautiful young man who stepped out of the cloud-ship and bent over the little hand of the Queen to place his lips upon it. And the old Sun, high up in the sky, and almost ready to go away for the night, laughed loud and long as he looked down upon them, and sent down a shower of warm gold to flow over them like a blessing.

Yes, it was a beautiful party. Under a sunset of rose and purple and gold they sat

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around the big rocks in the glade. Queen Spring and King Summer, with the wood-nymphs and the birds and a band of amusing squirrels, sat on a great boulder, and with the music of the waterfall in their ears, ate the first cherries that the fruit fairies had made, and the fresh fish that the fishing fairies had caught from a big lake where the water-lilies make islands from which they could cast their lines. By and by the stars came out and set their candles burning where the leaves left space. And all the little boats that the boat-fairies had made in such a hurry were manned each by a firefly, and they sailed up and down the broad stream with their lights twinkling, while the fairies sang and danced and capered, for the elves were frisky in the starlight, and they braved the waterfalls until

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The Little Boats that the Fairies Had Made.

the flashing, sparkling waters were alive with brilliant green.

Yes, Summer danced with Spring and the stars gossipped. "There will be a wedding," the Moon whispered to the Wind. But the South Wind was angry, mild as he generally was, for in his heart he loved the little Spring and did not wish her to marry Summer. So he sulked and fretted, and at last, in a temper, went and hunted up the bold East Wind,

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his brother, and suggested that the North and East Winds make a little thunder-storm to end the party. That was very mean of the South Wind, but his heart was sore.

So it came about that the fairies in the star-shine glade heard a rumble of thunder, and then a great flash of lightning tore across the sky just above them. After that the rain came down upon them, and they found themselves in the midst of a very bad storm. Fortunately the nymphs had keys to the trunks of the oak-trees, and so Summer and Spring both found shelter. But the little fairies had to hide under the mosses and roll themselves up in the leaves, and the fireflies left their boats of water-lily petals to wither away, while they found their beds among the bushes.

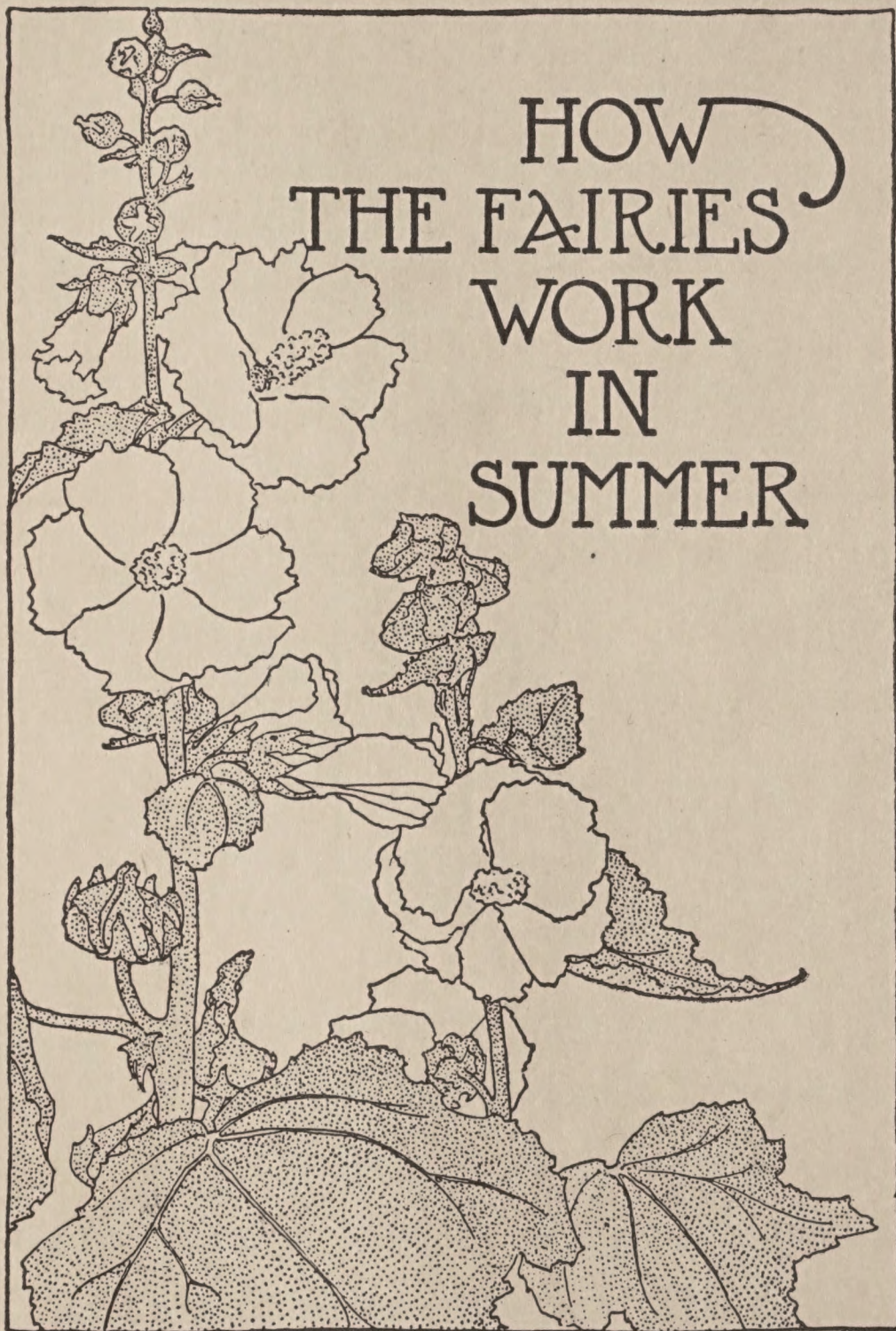
In the morning, the South Wind was

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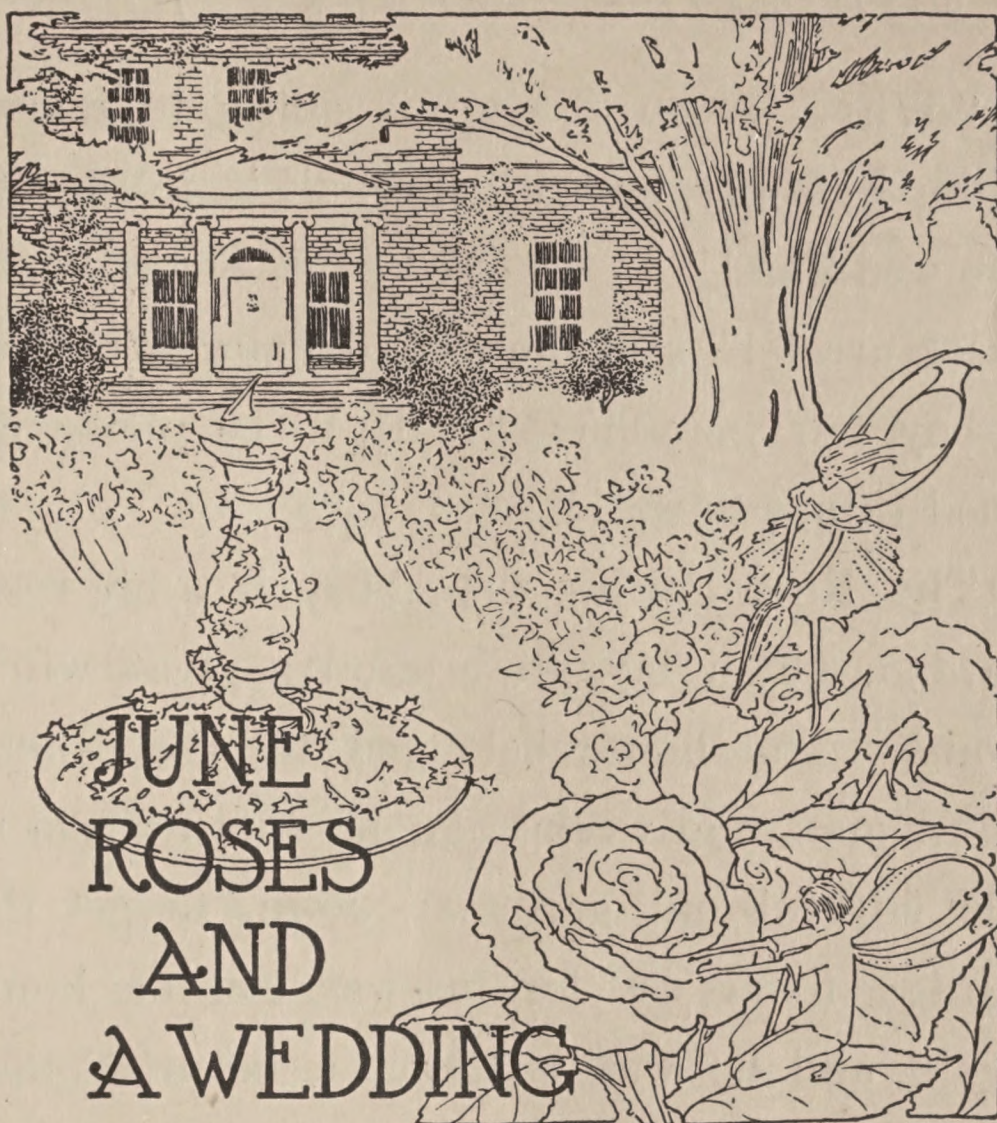
ashamed of himself and blew diligently to dry off the leaves and the flowers. He begged the Sun to shine his warmest to help him. And the old Sun laughed again to see these foolish ones, and shone with a greater than usual warmth, so that the people in the world talked of how hot the day was, but they did not know about the May Party which Queen Spring gave to the King of the Summer, and because of which the South Wind was not pleased.



HOW
THE FAIRIES
WORK
IN
SUMMER







“**H**AVE you heard the news?”

One Rose Fairy asked the question of another Rose Fairy as they worked side by side on the fresh blooms of a great rose-bush.

“No,” answered the other. “What is it?”

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“Why, Queen Spring is going to marry King Summer, and we shall all be invited to the wedding!”

“Hurrah!” said the second Fairy, who was a boy fairy. “There’s sure to be plenty of good things to eat!”

The Rose Fairies were busy in a big rose-garden, which lay all around a great, white house. The house belonged to a Southern gentleman, and weeks ago he had written to his faithful old gardener, John, to get the garden fixed up, for he was coming home again, and he was bringing a beautiful new wife.

Now old John was one of Mother Nature’s favorite gardeners. When he wanted anything done he just talked to the good Mother and told her all about it. And then she would send as many of her housekeeper

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fairies as she could spare and they would give old John as much help as possible on his gardens.

Therefore, when the gray-haired gardener received the news of his master's return, he at once consulted Dame Nature. Then he worked as hard as ever he could getting the ground ready, so that when some Rose Fairies should be sent they could at once help him to put the garden into full bloom. In this way his master's bride would be greeted by the wonderful fragrance and the soft colors of hundreds of June roses, when she came to her new home.

You must understand that Mother Nature never does things to help lazy people. If old John had not worked very hard himself, Dame Nature would not have bothered to make his rose garden beautiful. But he was

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an industrious old fellow, and also he was very honest and sweet-natured. He loved his master, he loved Mother Nature, and he loved the flower fairies and the flowers they made. So John was able to have splendid gardens—all over the country he was known for the wonderful roses that he grew. But he could not have grown those roses if the fairies had not come to put all the fine touches on the petals, and to blow open the big buds with their tiny bellows, and if the little garden fairies had not been sent regularly to drive away the worms, and to sprinkle the rose-trees with fine mist that the little bugs hated, and which kept them from eating the leaves away.

Now the big garden had begun to look very beautiful. There were white roses and pink roses, and sweet-smelling red roses, and

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some roses that were pale golden in color. There were great clusters of climbing roses ; there were buds and full, perfect blooms, and there were roses just half-open, waiting for the fresh breezes and the morning sunbeams to complete the work that the fairies had done. And old John, with a little company of housekeeper fairies dancing around him, had taken large bunches of phlox and sweet peas and fresh peonies into the house, where he grouped them and gathered them for the little vases, the low dishes and the tall holders, until the whole house was filled with a delicate flower perfume, and wherever one looked there were bright flowers smiling and tall flowers gracefully nodding their heads as in welcome.

Meanwhile, there were preparations being made in Fairy-land for a gorgeous wedding.

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All through the land the bird messengers of Summer and the elf messengers of Mother Nature had spread the good news. Queen Spring was to marry King Summer, and there would be a holiday for the fairies. The world must be all flowers and sunshine and blue skies and starry, moonlighted nights when the Summer King took the beautiful Spring to be his bride, and the animals in the woods, the birds all through the forests, the winds and the little breezes, and the elves and the gnomes—all were to come to the wedding.

The old Sun rolled merrily over the roof of Mother Nature's cave and sang out a greeting. The good Mother came to the door, a smile on her lips.

"Where's the great Eagle?" she asked the Sun.

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"Up on the high mountain under the Moon," he replied.

"I want him to come and perform the marriage ceremony for Spring and Summer," said Dame Nature.



"The Sun Discovered a Great Bird."

"Leave that to me," answered the Sun.
"I'll see him very shortly, and I'll tell him to come."

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Then the Sun rode away, and rode on and on until his bright eye discovered a great bird, standing with wings outspread at the top of a high mountain.

“There’s the old Eagle,” Master Sun said to himself, and called out to the great fellow.

The Eagle looked up and nodded. He was still sleepy, and he did not want to go to a wedding. But when Dame Nature spoke, all the birds, even their king, the Eagle, must obey, and so he promised the Sun that he would be down at Mother Nature’s cave at dawn the next day.

Well, it was a very happy wedding. Father Sun could not be there, because he was making the dawn in the far East, and he sent the rainbow fairies to paint the sky a deep rose, and to throw out banners of violet,

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while he himself poured on the gold-dust, as he gradually rode up the sky, to be on hand to give his blessing when the wedding was over.

Mother Nature gave the bride away. Spring was very dainty and charming in a gown all woven of lilies-of-the-valley. Thousands of little fairy sewers and wreath-makers had worked for many hours on this gown, and it shimmered in the first sun-rays as if the dewdrops that the dawn fairies had sprinkled over it were so many diamonds. It had a long train of fresh, shining, green leaves, and on Spring's golden hair rested a little crown of white rosebuds, while her bouquet was of pale yellow roses set in a border of lily leaves. King Summer wore a close-fitting suit of bright green, and he was very handsome, with his dull bronze hair, and his tall, slender figure.

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Mother Nature had selected the hill back of the Wind Cave for the place where the wedding should be. All around it grew tall, old trees, and on the brow of the hill the fairies had spread a thick grass carpet. Every fairy brought a flower, so that when they were all gathered around it looked like a great posy of tiny sweet faces and flower blooms. The mischievous elves had captured some squirrels, which they used as horses, and a number of gnomes rode to the wedding on the backs of the lazy old bullfrogs who didn't want to come to the wedding at all, but had to when they were tied up with honeysuckle vines by a persistent but good-natured little brown gnome.

A large number of birds gathered in the trees around and sang a marriage song, and then the old Eagle, his eyes very bright, and

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his wings carefully folded back against his sides, read the marriage lines, in a deep voice that sent the echoes floating out over the hills. And just as he finished the Sun sent a great glow to settle around the wedding-party, and King Summer kissed the Spring amid a shower of gold spray.

The broad cloud-ship of the Summer, with its team of birds, was all ready for the bride and bridegroom. Mother Nature kissed the Spring, the wood-nymphs wiped their pretty eyes with their little leaf handkerchiefs, and then the big ship rolled away toward the Sun, so that the bride might receive his blessing.

Then Mother Nature addressed the fairies :

“ There is a banquet spread over before the Wind Cave,” she said. “ To-day will be a holiday. You may eat and drink and have

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a good time. To-morrow we will start work. I want every fairy to get out his and her summer farm clothes and start out to the fields. The orchard fairies will begin with the fruit-trees. The apples and the peaches and the pears must be worked with until there is a big crop of each. The peach crop will, of course, need the first attention. The peaches this year must be many and fine.

“The garden fairies will go into the vegetable patches. Wherever seed has been sown there will be plants to help up to the ground, and in many cases there will be vegetables to form and to finish. The tomatoes must be big and luscious. There must be full pea-pods and fine, thick ears of corn. You can have the Rain when you need him to send showers; you have only to ask the Sun and

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he will shine where you want him. But one and all you must be busy.

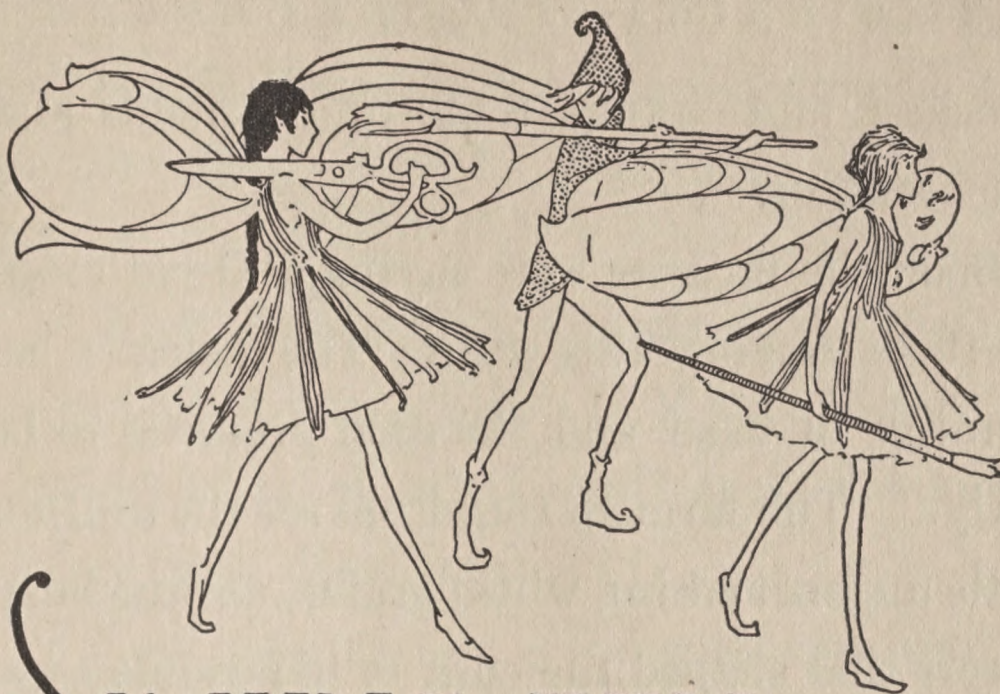
“The field fairies must be prepared to live in the fields from now until the crops have been harvested. The grain fairies will need to be working often both at night and in the day. And to every field you must take some discipline elves, to prick those lazy farmhands, and also to keep the fairies themselves at work and in order.”

So that was how it came about that while the Summer and the Spring drifted together over the world, happy in each other's love and company, the housekeeper fairies had a holiday and a feast, after which they took a good sleep and in the morning put on their brown leaf-suits and began their hard summer's work. But they were all happy; they loved their work as much as they enjoyed

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their play, and they loved good Mother Nature and the charming Spring and the generous Summer, and they loved the world and all the people and the animals in it.





MAKING JULY FIELDS ^{AND} GARDENS

“WAKE up, Fairykins!”

“Wake up! Wake up!”

Through the woods and in the meadows,
on the river banks and in the gardens,
sleepy little fairies tumbled out of beds of
leaves and moss and flowers, and put on their
workaday garments of dusty grass, should-
ered their big shears and paint-boxes and

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brushes, and tramped off to the fields and the orchards.

Soon the farmers were saying, "Great crops we'll be having this year. The wheat's beginning to head and the corn promises to be early." The farmers could not see the million little fingers making wheat grains, nor the busy shears that shaped the corn to handsome ears, while other little workers packed the big green shells with moist and creamy grains.

Nor did the farmers see the thousand little figures perched upon the tree-boughs, molding apples, painting in their rosy cheeks, and brushing up the tinted nap on quickly ripening peaches.

But the big honey-bee, who looked longingly at the peaches, was given a real scolding by a brown elf who was coloring fruit on the plum-tree.

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“Aren’t there flowers enough from which to get your honey?” demanded the little elf.

“What difference?” inquired the big bee, somewhat disdainfully. “Who are you to say whether or no I shall suck the sweet juices from these peaches?”

“I am one of the elves who were sent to make the peach-trees heavy with a crop of fine fruit, and I have a grass spear that will hurt if I use it to prick that big yellow stomach of yours.”

“Ha! ha!” sneered the bee. “A grass spear! Who’s afraid?” and settled comfortably down on a beautiful, large, newly-tinted peach.

This was too much for the elf. He leaned over and sent the point of his grass-blade into the bee’s stomach.

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"I Have a Grass Spear that Will Hurt."

"Ouch!" cried the greedy bee. "That hurts!"

"Then let my peaches alone!" answered the elf.

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"I'll sting you," snapped the bee.

But the little elf disappeared under a leaf, and though the bee hunted and hunted, he could not be found. But whenever the bee went near a peach and hovered there, the long grass blade seemed to come out of space to give its prick. So majestically the bee sailed away, crying out :

"Never mind, you naughty elf; I'll get even with you yet!"

A beautiful yellow and black butterfly came into the orchard. He sailed gracefully around over the grass and looked longingly at the peaches.

"Let's make the butterfly carry us away to the big garden yonder," suggested a tiny peach-blossom fairy, whose work was all over long ago.

"All right," a bright little elf replied.
"Have you any vine with you?"

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"Here's a wisteria tendril," the fairy said eagerly.

With that they began to chase the butterfly.

Back and forth they went, up and down through the orchard. It was a long time before they could catch the butterfly. But at last the poor thing was tired, so it lighted on the moss under a peach-tree and asked wearily :

"What do you want?"

"A ride," said the elf. "We want to sail over the garden."

"But I can't carry you both," said the butterfly.

At that the fairies looked at each other, and laughed.

"How stupid!" they both cried at once.

"I tell you what we can do," said the Elf

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to the Fairy. "You go to the garden, and wait there while the butterfly comes back for me."

"Come along," sighed the butterfly. "Maybe I'll meet a friend who will carry you."

They did meet, not one friend but many, and soon a whole band of orchard fairies were riding on butterfly wings to the garden, where they set to work at once to curl the petals of the marigolds and dye the many-colored leaves of the zinnias.

And then Mother Nature sent a thousand new fairies, each bearing a tiny tube of flower honey and a little bottle of pure flower perfume. These things came from the good Mother's own storehouse, for which she makes each year the most marvellously sweet-tasting and sweet-smelling dews.

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But the messenger from Mother Nature told the fairies to wait till night to open up the bottles and the tubes. For only a few people know how the flowers get their perfume and their honey, and the secret must be kept. So the fairies stored their bundles down around the plant-roots and curled themselves up in the grape-vines that surrounded the garden to wait for the night.

Suddenly one little fairy was heard to cry out, in a panic-stricken voice, " We forgot to tell the Moon that we should need her to-night! . And I heard the North Wind say that he had promised to send a cloud curtain for the Lady Moon's house to-night, because she was not feeling well and wanted to go to bed ! "

" There are two little breezès playing hide-and-seek around this arbor now," spoke up a

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common-sense fairy. "Let them take word to the Wind not to send the cloud."

So the first little fairy chased the breezes till he caught one and gave the message. And the breezes, not at all pleased to have to stop their play, grumbled and fussed, but finally started away.

But the forgetfulness of the fairies was the cause of a good deal of disturbance. For the Rain, hearing that the Wind was gathering together a cloud-curtain, had decided that this would be a fine night for a shower.

"The gardens need watering," he said, and made his plans accordingly.

However, when the little breezes found their father, they told him what the fairies said. He was very angry. "Somebody was careless in the performance of his duty,"

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the Wind raged. "People who forget to give important messages should be punished."

With a great lot of bluster he sent the clouds scattering, and then, to his astonishment, he heard the Rain complain :

"Hello, there, what are you doing?" demanded the Rain. "I was just getting ready to make up some showers!"

"You can't do it," shouted the Wind. "The fairies are making gardens and must have the light from the Moon's house. It's too bad; I'll have to go and tell her that some one forgot to bring her the message."

"Some fairy should be punished for this," declared the Rain. "Now my plan's all upset!"

The Lady Moon, in her house-boat high in the sky, had just settled down to a quiet rest when she heard the Wind whispering :

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"Lady Moon, Lady Moon."

"Yes?" she asked.

"You'll have to light up to-night, after all," said the Wind. "It's too bad, but the fairies are making gardens to-night and they need the Moonlight."

"Oh, bother," sighed the Moon. "I was just settling down to a nice sleep. Whose fault was it that I was not notified?" she asked.

"That I don't know," the Wind replied. "Whoever it was ought to be punished."

Well, the end of it all was that the Moon lighted up her house and set it sailing gently over the sky, and the Wind went into his cave to bed and the Rain stayed under his mountain.

Out in the gardens the fairies opened the tiny bottles and bark tubes, and poured

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honey-dew into the hearts of the flowers, and sprinkled the bright petals with delicious perfumes. But suddenly a band of fireflies came sailing over the garden, and they carried among them a broad leaf, on which sat the Queen of the Flower Fairies.

All the little workers stopped and bowed to their Queen.

"Who forgot to give the message to the Lady Moon?" the Fairy Queen asked.

And a tiny green leaf elf stepped forward and, with head hanging, said very softly:

"It was I."

"You are banished to the Winter Cave," said the Queen Fairy. "Go quickly and work with the ice elves. While your companions sleep you shall work, until you learn not to forget."

Then the Queen's leaf chariot floated

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away, the fireflies shining like stars all around it.

And the poor little elf said good-bye to his friends and walked off all alone. It was far away to the ice elves' home, and he knew that it would be a hard journey. So he begged a grasshopper to take him a part of the way, and the grasshopper let him get up on his back and away they went.

People who forget to do important things soon lose their places in the world.

When the Sun came up in the morning he smiled warmly over the gardens. The little fairies were fast asleep after their night labors, but the flowers were bright and fresh and beautiful.

The children came out in the early morning also and gathered fresh nosegays for the breakfast-table.

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“Don’t the flowers smell delicious?” is what they ask each other.

But nobody realizes that the reason for that wonderful fragrance lies in the labors of the little housekeeper fairies who worked so hard while the world lay peacefully sleeping.





THE FAIRIES BY THE SEA

EVERY summer Mother Nature sends a band of little fairy housekeepers down to the seashore. She does this because she knows that soon the boys and girls will be through with school, and then a great many of them will go for vacations by the sea. So the beaches must be smooth, and the little shell-folks must be ready, and the old Ocean must have his instructions for the summer months.

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First the four big Winds each make a trip to the Ocean. They howl and they roar at him, for the Ocean is many thousands of years old and is very deaf. Therefore the Winds must make a big noise in order that the Ocean may understand that now has come the time for a good, thoroughgoing storm, because after this storm he must remain gentle and kind and full of deep music for a number of weeks.

After the Winds comes the jolly old Sun. He laughs his big, hearty laugh to attract the Ocean's attention. Then he tells the Ocean that he is going to shine very strongly over the water, to keep the old Ocean warm and comfortable in the days when the children will want to come and bathe in the water that rolls over the beach. The Ocean must make all his little waves obey exactly the

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directions that are given ; they must not wash any of the children out to the deep sea, for that is the way little folks drown.

In a short while the sand-fairies begin to appear. These fairies have been sleeping back under the brush that lines the long beach. Mother Nature's band of housekeeper fairies wake up the sleepy sand-fairies and tell them to go out and pile up the white sand in big hills, for Master Sun is there to warm the sand and make it delightful to roll in.

Then the housekeepers wade out into the shallow water and send a call to the seaweed-fairies. The seaweed-fairies hear them and come floating in, bringing big bunches of soft weeds with them.

"Where are the sand-crabs and the shrimps?" the housekeepers want to know.

"We're here," comes the answer, and thou-

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sands and thousands of little sand-crabs begin to play in the sand, while in the small gulleys the shrimps chase each other in high glee.

“Summer is here, and the children are coming!” sing the fairies, but the sand-crabs are not so well-pleased with the news.

“They are naughty children,” says one. “They catch us and crush us, just for the fun of seeing us squash.”

“And they tear our bodies away from the shells, so as to keep our shells and carry them away in those funny buckets they play with,” spoke up one of the little periwinkles.

“Yes, but we get even,” declared one of the larger sand-crabs. “When the little ones go in bathing, we nip their toes, and maybe they are not frightened!”

“You mustn’t hurt the children,” said one little fairy. “They do not know any better.

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It is the fault of the older people, who do not teach them to love our good Mother Nature and to be kind to dumb creatures."

"Well, we don't hurt them," protested the crab. "We just scare them a little."

Soon all the fairies are at work with tiny shovels and rakes. All over the beach the army goes, scooping up the sand and smoothing it down again, drawing it through the fine little rakes till it glistens in the sunlight. Then the old Ocean rolls up and over it, and when he goes back to the deeper places the sand lies smooth and clean, and ready for the children.

When the boys and girls come with their buckets and their shovels and their sand toys they do not see any of the sand-fairies.

But in the night, when the deep-sea music comes echoing through the clear air, some

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little boy or girl tucked snugly away in bed will hear a different kind of music. It is the sand-fairies singing as they dance on the beach under the moonlight, doing their work while they dance, keeping the beach sweet and clear, and building up great sand castles that shine under the stars.

But in the morning there are only a few conch-shells to tell the story of the joyous race that the fairies ran through the waves, for the tiny people have gone under the rocks and among the bushes, to be safe in their bunks until the night shall come. Should we search for them we would not find them, for a sand-fairy can hide under a leaf, and when we turn the leaf the fairy will be buried in the sand at our feet.

Sometimes, however, a boy or a girl goes fishing. The line is cast, and there comes a

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nibble, but when the line is brought up there is no fish. A little sea-fairy was playing in the water near the line, and saw it. She also saw a little fish nibble at the bait and she whispered :

“ Don’t eat that ! You’ll be caught ! ”

And the fish quickly jerks away from the bait, and thanks the little fairy.

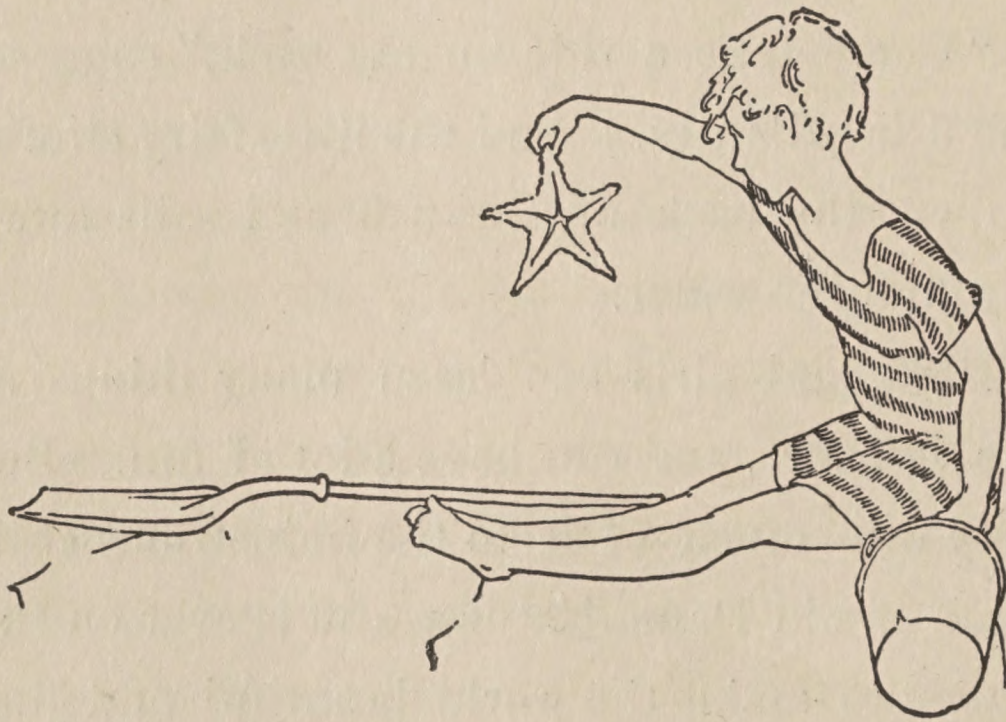
“ Come take a ride on my back,” suggests the fish gallantly. And the little fairy climbs up on the back of the fish and sails away through the water.

Boys and girls can learn many things at the seashore, and can have a lot of fun. But they owe much of it to the industrious children of old Dame Nature, who is ever on the watch to make the world beautiful and fine for the children and the grown people as well.

We lie in the sand and wonder at the music

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of the sea ; we roll beneath the warm sun and talk of the delights of the seashore. But we need very strong sight to find a stray fairy, though a small boy may think that he has surprised the hiding-place of an impish elf when he picks up a starfish stranded at ebb-tide.





WHEN THE HARVEST COMES

SUDDENLY there spread through Fairy-land the sad news of the death of Queen Spring. Dear little Spring, so beautiful but so frail—the Summer King's love could not save her. She gradually faded away, until there was just a delicate form, very white, very dainty, like some fair flower out of which all the life has gone.

King Summer carried her in his cloud-ship

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to a small cave under the cliffs by the sea. There the fairies built a great couch of fragrant leaves and on this Queen Spring was laid. Then Mother Nature selected twelve little housekeeper fairies to stay with the dead Spring. They were to keep the cave sweet and clean, and to see that nothing entered to disturb the quiet of the place. You see, Queen Spring is dead only for a while ; after a few months she will wake up to life again, and once more will be crowned Queen of a new, fresh, blooming world.

You remember the beautiful Princess in the fairy-tale, whose name was Snow-White, and how a wicked witch gave her a poisoned apple to eat. Snow-White seemed dead to her little friends, the seven dwarfs ; so they carried her to the top of a mountain and put her in a glass case. One day a Prince rode by, and

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kissed the beautiful girl as she lay there. In doing so he disturbed the glass case, and Snow-White was given a jolt that made the poisoned apple come out of her mouth. With that she became alive once more, and later, she married the Prince.

There is no wicked witch to enchant Queen Spring, but she cannot thrive in the very hot weather. Therefore she wilts away, and not until the Frost Prince has laid his hands upon her, will she come back to life. But the South Wind, faithful to his love, sighs around the door of the cave, always believing that his affectionate whisperings will reach the heart of the sleeping Queen.

King Summer, of course, felt very lonely without his wife. He came back to the fields where the fairies were working, and he seemed much older and much graver. He told the

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fairies that he did not think that he could be king much longer ; he asked the Sun to help the little people hurry the grain along so that it might be gathered in.

Very soon the farmers began to talk of the harvesting. The wheat and the rye must be cut, the hay must be gathered and stacked, and the corn, which was now drying under the Sun's strong beams, must be chopped down and set up in great piles in the fields.

Mother Nature went wandering around day by day, noting the progress that had been made with the crops. She was pleased with the big melons, the rich coloring and size of the pumpkins, the fine, beautiful sprays of the wheat heads. She sent out the goldenrod fairies in full force, and told them to make the fields thick with tall, yellow, fluffy stalks.

And then one day the harvest began. What

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a working and a chattering there was! But the farmers and their helpers only heard the locusts singing and the bees humming. They did not know that the buzzing sounds of Summer were the voices of a million wee creatures, lending help unseen as they cut the grain, and piled the pumpkins high, and levelled off the meadows, until they were nothing but stubble set all over with great, beautiful mounds of yellow corn husks.

At night, however, when the world slept, the fairies had their harvest festivals. Now the Sun made gallant love to the Moon and persuaded her to set her house aglow with golden lights, so that in the bright illumination the fairies might play and dance. Presently green elves were sailing through the darkness astride the backs of great, green-golden, brown, and cloud-white moths, and

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the field fairies had dropped their brown aprons to put on skirts of poppy petals and wraps of larkspur.

Tiny gnomes, who roam the woods to see that the brown shells of the nuts are being filled with good, rich meat for boys and girls to eat a little later, made the fairies one and all hold their sides with laughter. For each little gnome had climbed into a snapdragon, and the snapdragons danced and ran and jumped, and played all sorts of funny pranks.

Lady Moon, sitting at her window, laughed a gay, little laugh, and dropped a few magical beams here and there among the fairies. Soon a green elf rode up on a moth and alighting, bowed to a bright little fairy in a poppy-petal dress.

“Will you dance with me?” he asked her.

“Why, yes,” she answered shyly.

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But when they had danced for a little the green elf coaxed the poppy fairy to a bit of moss under a shapely mushroom.

"I will be your beau," he whispered.

"Yes?" she questioned.

"You will be my sweetheart, then," he said.

So the elf and the fairy plighted their troth and the bright Moon Lady smiled on contentedly.

"There will be weddings in Fairy-land," she said, and seemed very well pleased with herself.

But the Moon Lady grew tired presently. One by one she put out the lights in her windows. There came a night that was very dark, for the stars were holding a council behind great walls of clouds. The fairies had to beg the fireflies to guide them to

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their camps under the bushes, and that night everybody had a beautiful sleep.

The next morning the berry fairies went very early to the places where they had put the largest and sweetest berries, and that day they breakfasted in Fairy-land off tender berries served in grape-leaf cups.

"We've had a fine Summer Kingdom," remarked a mischievous-looking elf.

"I wonder what we'll be expected to do next?" inquired a tiny but very pretty fairy.

"Well, last year we went down to Mother Nature's cave and helped with the stores that she was laying away for the winter. You know the ice elves and the snow fairies have to have things to eat, and Mother Nature and Father Winter always take them into their homes to feed them."

"I should think ice elves and snow fairies

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would melt away if they went near Mother Nature's big fire," said another fairy, a trifle disdainfully.



"I Will Be Your Beau."

"I don't suppose they go near the fire," the elf explained patiently. "Mother Nature makes the Breeze boys serve them out before the door."

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"You sound as if you had been there," remarked the pert little fairy.

"I was," confessed the elf. "Once I disobeyed an order and Mother Nature sent me to work with the ice elves as a punishment. Ugh! it was cold!"

"I know what we'll have to do next," spoke up a newly-arrived fairy. "We'll have to go to school and have the big owl teach us A. B. C.'s."

"Oh, dear," sighed the elf, "I can't ever remember all those letters. I think I'd rather be with the ice elves."

Just then a big gray goose came strutting through the meadow.

"There's one of our teachers now," exclaimed one of the fairies.

Sure enough, Mistress Gray Goose stopped by the little group.

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“The new school will open in the Brown Woods by the Singing Brook on Monday next,” she announced importantly. “Every elf and fairy must be present,” she said.

And the little elf was suddenly afraid of the teacher. He didn’t say anything, but just nodded his head. Even the fairies were shy in the presence of Gray Goose. They too nodded, and said very politely :

“We’ll be there.”

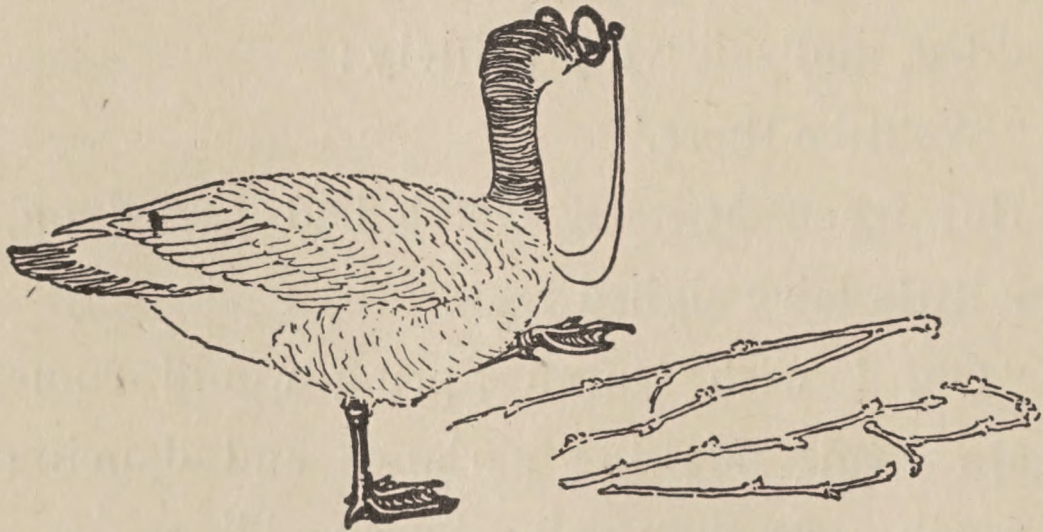
But when Mistress Goose had passed on, one little fairy sighed regretfully :

“Oh, I wish Queen Spring would come again soon. Making garlands and dancing is much nicer than going to school.”

“Never mind,” consoled the elf. “It won’t be long until Queen Spring does come alive again. I met a groundhog the other day and he told me that we should have a

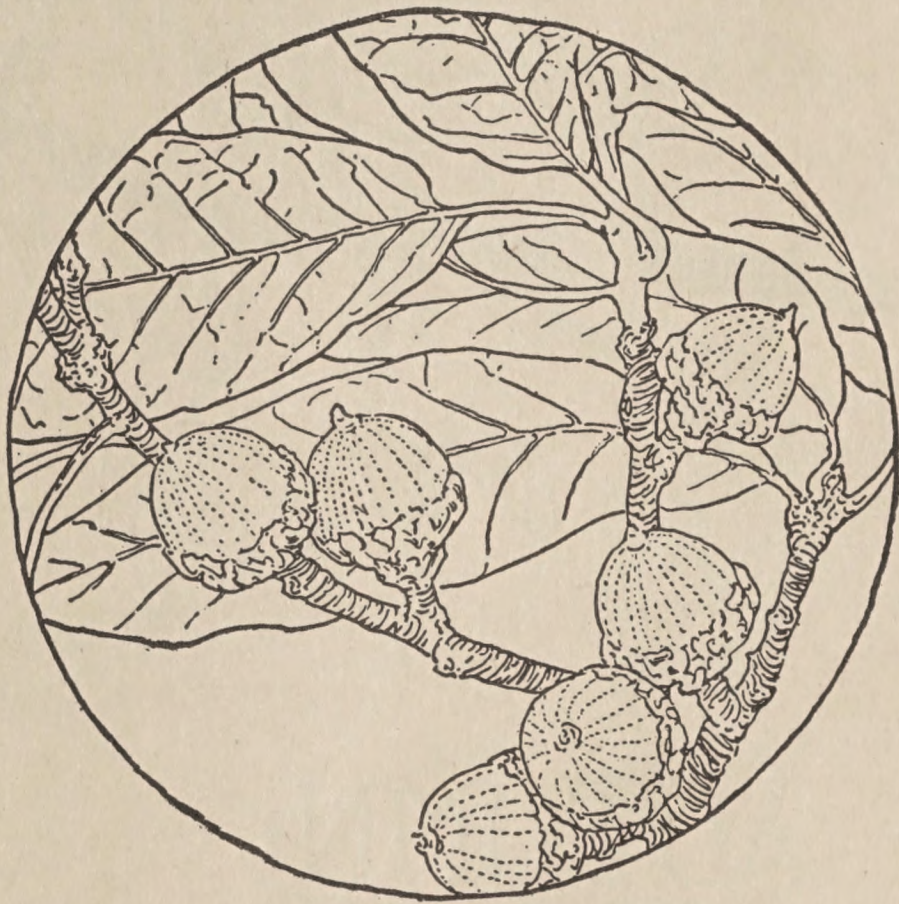
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very short winter. Old Grandfather Winter has had a lot of rheumatism lately, and he told the Sun that he did not think he could remain away from home long this year. So we'll have Spring shortly, anyhow, and then we'll have another good time."






AUTUMN
PREPAREDNESS



SEPTEMBER



AND THE FAIRIES' SCHOOL

KING SUMMER drifted down over the wind cave one morning, and stepping out of his cloud-ship, went in to say good-bye to Mother Nature.

“It’s time for me to be going,” he announced a little sadly. “I met young Autumn in the woods yesterday, and he accidentally fired off his gun at me.”

“He’s a reckless hunter,” Mother Nature

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commented. " But Grandfather Winter thought it time for him to try out his strength."

Young Autumn, I want you to know, was the youngest son of Grandfather Winter. Among the fairies he was looked upon as the handsomest young Prince in the world. When he took his gun and went out into the woods everybody knew that the reign of the Summer King was over.

While Summer talked with Mother Nature, young Autumn came strolling up to the door of the cave.

" Hello," he said. " Where's the cloud-ship going? "

" Southward," replied the Summer King, and at once got ready to leave.

After the big cloud-ship had sailed away, Autumn sat down by Mother Nature's big fire.

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"It feels good to sit here," he declared.
"Those Wind sons of yours seem determined to make the world chilly to-day."

"What news do you bring?" asked Dame Nature.

"Well, it looks as if my dear old father, Winter, were anxious to get down here. There's a big army of ice elves frisking around the North Pole, impatient to hurl their tiny spears against the flower fairies. Even the snow fairies are hunting up excuses to come this way. I think we'll have to get busy, that's all."

"Did you see Mr. Owl anywhere in the woods?" asked Mother Nature.

"No, but the Hare told me that the Owl was writing busily away on his tree stump in the dell. The Gray Goose had a band of wood gnomes combing the mosses, and the

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old Rabbit had on his spectacles as if he meant business. The word has gone out that the school is ready and the fairies are hiding in the gardens in the hope that nobody will find them and send them to school."

Mother Nature laughed.

"They do that trick every year. I'll soon find them. Meanwhile, I wish you would take charge of the leaf-turning and the nut-making. There are burrs to be opened all through the woods, and the leaves on the trees ought to be recolored just as quickly as possible. When Winter swoops down with his ice elves we must be all ready to fight our own little battle. But the fairies must learn their letters and have their drills. I need a lot of new messengers, some new telephone workers, and soon I shall need many

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bookkeepers. Before Winter actually comes we must get all the stores ready, and that means real, hard work. It has been a busy but a beautiful year; I'm afraid, however, that my little people have been growing lazy. I want to see how many of them can throw a spear and how many of them can wrestle. We must give the ice people a good battle, even though they overcome us in the end, as, of course, they will."

Then Mother Nature called one of her fairy elf messengers and sent him flying to bring the fairies to school.

Down in the deep dell old Master Owl gave three loud, long hoots. From everywhere around appeared fairies and elves and small animals and wood gnomes. Mistress Gray Goose and old Brown Rabbit settled them one by one on their mossy seats under

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the trees, and the school work began. There were A. B. C.'s to learn and other lessons to recite. The smallest fairies were given sample flowers to make; and some of the boy elves were given fruit to color. The little fairies who had been doing these things through the year taught the others who had not yet done any of them, for there are new little fairies in Fairy-land every year, and each one must learn his trade.

Presently, the old Rabbit disappeared. When he came back, he was followed by a group of elf boys each carrying a bundle of swords made of tree bark. After them came a band of gray squirrels, behind them a big wagon made of a part of a tree-trunk carefully hollowed out and filled with whole nuts.

Now what do you think the bark swords

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and the nuts were to be used for? Why, they were the fairies' ammunition! There was going to be war in Fairy-land, as there is every year when the army of snow fairies and ice elves come to take possession of the world. And the flower fairies and the tree fairies and the little elves who have been helping Mother Nature to do her housekeeping, all turn soldiers and fight a big fight. But in order that they may know the best ways of fighting, they have drills in the fairy school, and each little elf and fairy learns how to swing a sword and how to throw a nut straight and swiftly. Just as people out in the world prepare for war by drilling men to be soldiers, so the old Owl and his teachers drill the fairies to be soldiers who can do battle with the winter invaders.

The old Owl hung up a big leaf on the

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trunk of a tree, and the fairies used this as a target. How they threw those big brown nuts! It was great sport, and it was surprising to see what strength some of the little people had. The Sun poked his head through the trees and shot out a few spears of gold all his own at the target, and Mother Nature came over the hills and watched from a grassy slope the progress that the fairies were making. Young Autumn joined her after a little, and gave a loud "Bravo" whenever a tiny elf hit the leaf right in the center.

Then they wrestled with each other, elves and gnomes, and when one little gnome sent another gnome crashing to the ground, a flower fairy would help the fallen one to pick himself up, and would bind up his wounds with leaf handkerchiefs. Nobody was really hurt, but some of them did become rather rough.

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After a while Mother Nature spoke to the Brown Rabbit and the old Owl.

“I think they have had enough,” she said. “The school will assemble again to-morrow and every day for the next two weeks. Meanwhile the woods must be swept by the Winds and the Rain, and the leaves dried. I must have a new carpet for the cave, and new blankets to keep the flower fairies warm when the winter people send them to bed to wait for the Spring.”

So the school was dismissed, but the fairies had had a good time playing at war. They were all happy and flushed, like children who have had a lot of good, healthful exercise, and they went to work with a will getting the nut burrs open and giving the leaves all sorts of beautiful colors. The people in the world said, “This is a wonderful Autumn. The

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trees are gorgeous in their new dresses of yellow and red and brown-green." Into their houses they took great bunches of the bright leaves. Often a big automobile would stop under the trees, and a great man would come and pull away the branches where a tiny fairy which he could not see was busily working. There would not be time for the fairy to escape, so he would have to get into the automobile along with the leaves, and then what a glorious ride he would have ! But he would have to stay hidden, because he did not know how these strange people would treat him if he showed himself. Presently he would be carried into a house, and then the leaves would be set in a tall jar. The fairy would see many things that appeared new and remarkable. One fairy got into a house where there was a little child, who sat on her moth-

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er's knee by the fireplace and listened to fairy stories. The fairy pricked up his ears. "They're talking about us," he chuckled to himself. Then he had an idea. After the little girl was put to bed, and all the lights were out, he scrambled down from his high perch and ran all through the house. He found the room where the child was asleep, and he went in. He climbed up on the foot of the bed, and then he dropped lightly down on the baby's pillow. His soft little whisper was heard by the child, and she woke up and saw him.

"Don't be frightened," the fairy said. "I'm Billy Leaf Fairy. Next time you go into the woods lift up every leaf you see and maybe you'll find me. If you do not find me, one of my brothers may be there. Tell him that you know me and he'll tell you some wonderful secrets."

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Then he danced away off the bed. "Watch me," he said. And he took off his little cap to the Lady Moon, and bowed very low. "May I borrow a moonbeam?" he asked.

"You may," said the Moon, and sent a beam streaming in at the window.

In the midst of the moonbeam the fairy danced for the baby until the little eyes began to droop and the fairy told the Moon Lady to take her beam away. Then he dropped softly out of the window and scurried back to the woods.

In the morning when the child awoke she told a wonderful story of her dream about the little brown fairy who promised to tell her a secret. Whenever she goes to the woods she turns over the leaves and looks for the fairy. I do not think that she has found him or one of his brothers yet, but perhaps, if she is pa-

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tient, he will show himself to her one day. However, she believes in fairies, because she herself has seen one.





GETTING READY FOR INVASION

ONE little squirrel said to another little squirrel :

“Hurry! The fairies are coming! We must get in our winter supply of provisions before all the walnuts and shellbarks and hickory-nuts have been gathered in for the war with the ice elves.”

“What’s the difference?” demanded the other little squirrel, scornfully. “They only

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use the nuts for cannon balls and bullets, and when the battle is over the ground will be thick with perfectly good, sound nuts, and we shall not have even the trouble of hunting for them, but can pick them up in any quantity."

"Why don't we go and offer our services for the gathering of nuts, anyway?" asked the first little squirrel.

"Oh, bother, who wants to work when he doesn't have to?"

"Yes, but Mother Nature's been mighty good to us," protested the first squirrel. "When the baby squirrel in our nest was sick last year, and the little mother squirrel had so much to do, Mother Nature sent up a wood gnome to stay by the nest all the time, and see that we got everything that we needed. I think I'd like to help her now."

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“ Well, all right. I suppose we might as well be doing that as anything else.”

That was how it happened that two small squirrels appeared at the door of the wind cave, and told Mother Nature that they would like to help drag the little bark carts all around the forest. When other squirrels saw what was being done, they too offered to aid, and soon a whole small army of squirrels was at work, gathering and selecting and stacking up the big nuts that were to give the fairies weapons to use against the enemy.

Mother Nature picked out a number of elves to be captains.

Each elf selected a group of tree fairies and wind fairies and elves for his company. Every company found a piece of good, level ground on which to build up a barrier of hard earth and moss. The wood gnomes

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looked after the weapons, and piled up swords and cannon balls, all ready to be handed out to the little fighters. It was like the preparations for a snow fight; in fact, the fairies expected that the weapons of the ice elves would be snowballs and icicles.

Down in Dame Nature's cave there was a great bustling. For, you see, though Nature loves the housekeeper fairies and the little creatures of the forest, she must also be kind to the ice elves, who are Grandfather Winter's own children. Therefore she must see that her own people are taken care of, but she must feed as well the company that is to come. Sooner or later Grandfather Winter himself will arrive at the cave door, and as he is a somewhat sharp old gentleman, everything must be in good order for him. The great fire must be put out, because Winter

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cannot stand heat, and then all the little fairies nearly freeze, and have to go out and hunt up moss blankets and leaf coverings under which to keep warm.

Then, too, Grandfather Winter is very fond of the big Wind sons of Mother Nature. He likes to have them come into the cave with him, and then he tells them all manner of funny tales, in order to see how loudly they will howl with laughter. Poor Autumn once went into the cave, when his old father and his Wind cousins were there, and he nearly lost his beautiful suit of red-gold autumn leaves, so boisterous were they, and so roughly did they handle him.

Mother Nature was very particular before she fixed her house for the visit of Winter, to have all the fairy babies taken away and put into snug little beds. You see there are a

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great many baby fairies each year, and they are kept warm and cozy in Mother Nature's cave. But when the Winter is coming the good Mother sends all the babies to the woods and the fields, where they are tucked away in the hearts of the flower- and tree-buds that will grow up in the Springtime. There the babies sleep and grow, until the Spring wakes up and sends out her call for the flower fairies to come and prepare for the new glad world.

All the little girl fairies who are not needed for the war with the ice elves are sent into the woods too, and there they go to bed under the piled-up dry leaves that have been taken off the trees by Autumn, and one and all they go to sleep until after the ice elves have gone away again. Some of the fairies must, of course, stay to help. There are sure to be wounded elves and wind fairies and wood

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“The Girl Fairies Must Be Nurses.”

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gnomes when the battle is over, and a few girl fairies must be nurses to dress their wounds and nurse them until they are well once more.

So now the world is ready for the arrival of Winter. No one knows just when he will come. It may be in a few days or not for another month, and in the meantime Mother Nature keeps her fire lighted and roaring, and gives the fairies a vacation from their labors.

So, while the boys and girls are celebrating Hallowe'en, and are eating the grapes that the fairies have made, and are cutting pumpkins into Jack o' Lanterns—those big, fine pumpkins that the fairies built out in the fields—the tree elves are running through the woods searching for the goblins, chasing them out of their hiding-places in hollow tree-trunks, and driving them back to the wind cave to tell stories and give dances and play

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merry pranks. The goblins are strange little creatures. No one knows just where they belong, but the fairies can always find them, and they are the really funny people of Fairy-land. Sometimes the goblins are not very good.

Once there was a bad goblin who went into the house of a rich man, and stole away a tiny baby. But the fairies found the baby and carried him back to his parents; then they found out who the naughty goblin was, and they tied him up in his tree-trunk for a whole winter. He got so cold and so lonely that he begged them to let him go. So they made him promise that he would never be naughty again, and then they set him free. But no more goblins were found taking babies.

Now and again a few good-natured goblins find their way into the world of people, and let some good, kind artist who makes pictures

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for the books of the children draw them. And maybe a very nice poet-man or lady will see the goblins posing for the pictures, and will want to write verses or stories about them. Then the goblins will tell the poet-man or lady some of the secrets of goblin life, and presently the boys and the girls will have a brand new book, with wonderful goblin tales and rhymes, and pictures of these queer little people printed in gay colors.





JACK FROST MAKES A JOURNEY

“UGH! it’s cold!” Little Boy shivered as he jumped out of his warm bed. He made a dash for the window, to put it down. The air that was blowing in was frosty, for sure.

But what was Little Boy’s surprise to discover, sitting on the window sill, a tiny, nut-brown, odd-shaped little individual that reminded him of the pictures of Hop o’ My Thumb in the big book of fairy stories.

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"Who are you?" he asked, forgetting the cold in the eagerness of his curiosity.

"Oh, I'm a wood gnome," squeaked the queer, little creature. "May I come in?"

"Come on," invited Little Boy, and shut down the window.

Then Little Boy perched on the edge of the bed and the Brown Gnome jumped up beside him.

"Ever hear of Jack Frost?" he asked Little Boy.

"Oh, yes—he's Santa Claus's son," declared Little Boy proudly.

"Well—no. That may be what the books say. He's really Old Man Winter's eldest son. Santa Claus is Winter's brother."

"Then Jack Frost is Santa Claus's nephew," interrupted Little Boy.

"That's right," said the Gnome. "Well,

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Jack Frost made a long journey last night. If you'd been awake you would have seen him passing this way."

"That's too bad," murmured Little Boy. "What is he like?"

"Oh, he's a giant of a fellow. Dresses all in white, that shines very brightly. He's a fighter, he is, and he makes us little gnomes work terribly hard for his ice elves. That's why we don't like him."

"What are ice elves?" Little Boy wanted to know.

"They are Jack Frost's own people. They follow him wherever he goes, and then he gets the Wind Brothers to spread out their wings and carry his army of ice elves and snow fairies all over the world. But the Winds are jolly fellows and they like a good joke, so every little while they let their wings

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fall down and then all the snow fairies fall off and drop to the ground."

"Why, that must be when it snows!" cried Little Boy, making a delightful discovery.

"Of course," was the matter-of-fact comment. "But maybe Jack Frost doesn't get cross! Sometimes he gets into a big airship all made of heavy gray clouds and he chases these Winds until all of them are quite worn out."

"Do you think Jack Frost will make it snow soon?" inquired Little Boy anxiously. "I've broken my sled, and I'll have to get Grandfather to fix it."

"Better hurry," advised the Gnome. "I heard Jack Frost tell Mother Nature that he wanted to find the Winds right away. And that's why I ran off. I'm a summer gnome,

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but I was having such a good time with some squirrel nut gatherers that I got lost from my friends. I don't like cold weather and I won't work for Jack Frost, so I thought I'd hunt a place to keep cozy and warm. If I could find some nice, kind-hearted little boy, who would let me stay in his house, I'd be happy. In the Springtime of course I would go back to the woods."

"Oh, please stay with me, Mister Gnome," begged Little Boy, and the Gnome smiled very contentedly.

"You won't tell any one that I'm here?" he asked.

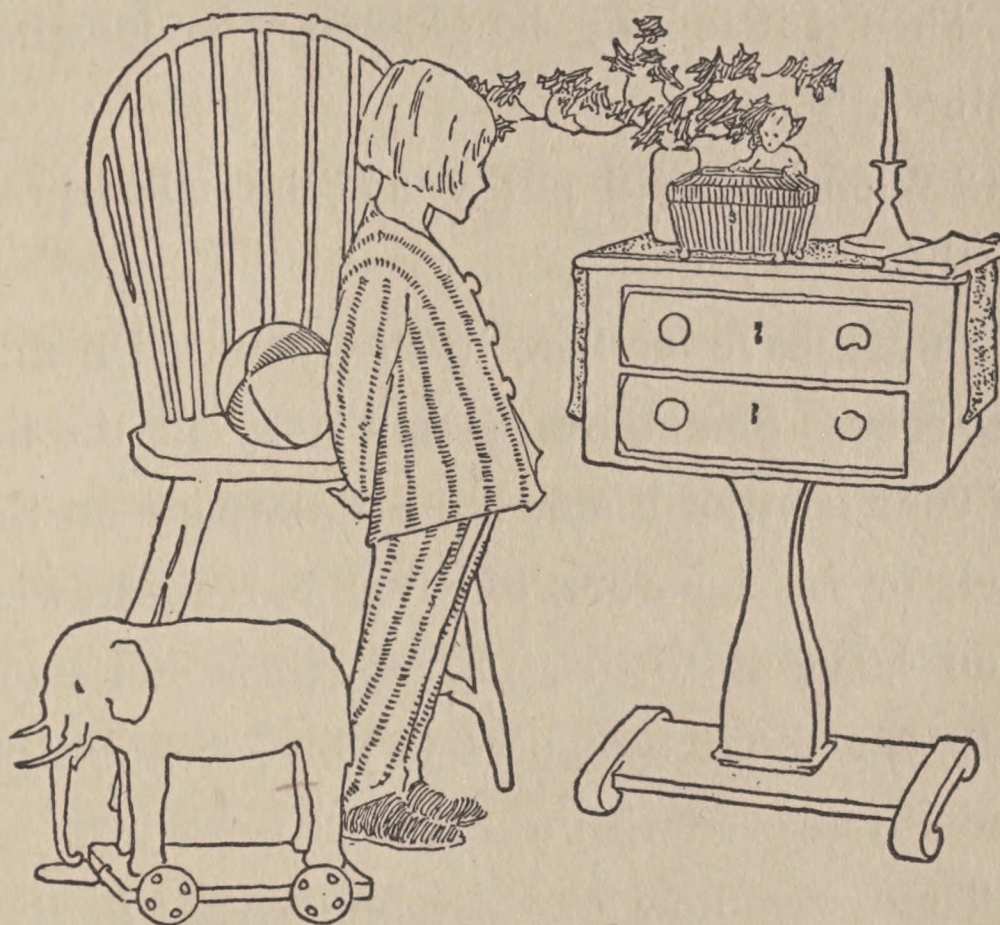
At that Little Boy hesitated. "I'd have to tell my mother," he said very seriously

"Well, mothers are reasonable beings," decided the Gnome. "Only, if you tell your mother that I'm here, you must also tell her

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not to ask to see me. No one may see me but you."

"All right," promised Little Boy. Then



Little Boy and the Gnome.

with a sudden inspiration, "Say, you don't eat much, do you?"

The Gnome laughed at this heartily.

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"I'll take a thimbleful of milk and three crumbs of bread for breakfast," he said smilingly.

Then Little Boy laughed too, and sighed relievedly.

"Where shall I put you?" he asked presently.

"Just leave me here in the room. I'll find quarters. Sometimes I can sleep in the toe of your boot, or under the counterpane on the bed, or in a corner of your bureau-drawer. You leave it to me. Every time you come into the room by yourself you give a cough and I'll answer with a squeak."

That was how the Gnome came to live with Little Boy, and that winter Little Boy learned more about the flowers and the trees and the birds and the animals than he learned at any other time in his life. For the little

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Gnome loved to tell him all about the work of the gnomes and the housekeeper fairies, and Little Boy came to know whole dozens of the fairies' names by heart.

Meanwhile, Jack Frost found the Wind Brothers.

"Shake hands," he cried. "And do me a favor! Father Winter wants me to bring down an army of ice elves and snow fairies. Won't you carry them for me?"

So the Winds stopped just for a moment to tell Mother Nature where they were going, and then off they started.

A few hours later the army of fairies was arranged ready for the coming of the Winter people. Each little company was stationed behind its breastworks, and the nut balls and bark swords were all placed well within their reach.

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Suddenly the air was filled with tiny flying particles, and presently, as the fluffy white things reached the ground, there stepped forth innumerable white, elf-like creatures. Each one carried a tiny ice spear, and when they were all banded together they made a rush at the moss barriers.

Then began real warfare. Many a little ice elf fell, struck down by a nut bullet. And many a little tree fairy staggered and stumbled, wounded by a tiny ice spear. But they kept up the fight until no one knew where were tree fairies or wind fairies or ice elves.

Strangely enough, it was Santa Claus who played peacemaker. Up in his toy shop at the North Pole he heard about Jack Frost and his journey. Poor old gentleman! He was very much annoyed.

“Just when I wanted the help of the

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fairies to make some of these Christmas toys," he grumbled. "Why didn't they wait? There's lots of time for snow and ice. Why, not half the boys and girls will have sleds till after Christmas."

Then Santa Claus had an idea! He went to his door and called a sea-gull to him.

"Go to Master Sun as quickly as ever you can," he commanded. "Tell him that Santa Claus doesn't want the housekeeper fairies all to go away. But the ice elves and the snow people are chasing them. Ask Master Sun to shine as brightly as he can on the ice elf army, so that the elves won't be able to fight. Then go and tell Mother Nature to send a band of helper fairies to my shop down below in the old Eagle's cave. I need some for the toy-making."

So the gull sailed away, and carried the

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message to the Sun. The task was much to that gentleman's liking.

"I never do like that Jack Frost crowd," he said, and then he burst through a heavy cloud curtain and shone his brightest right over the battle-ground.

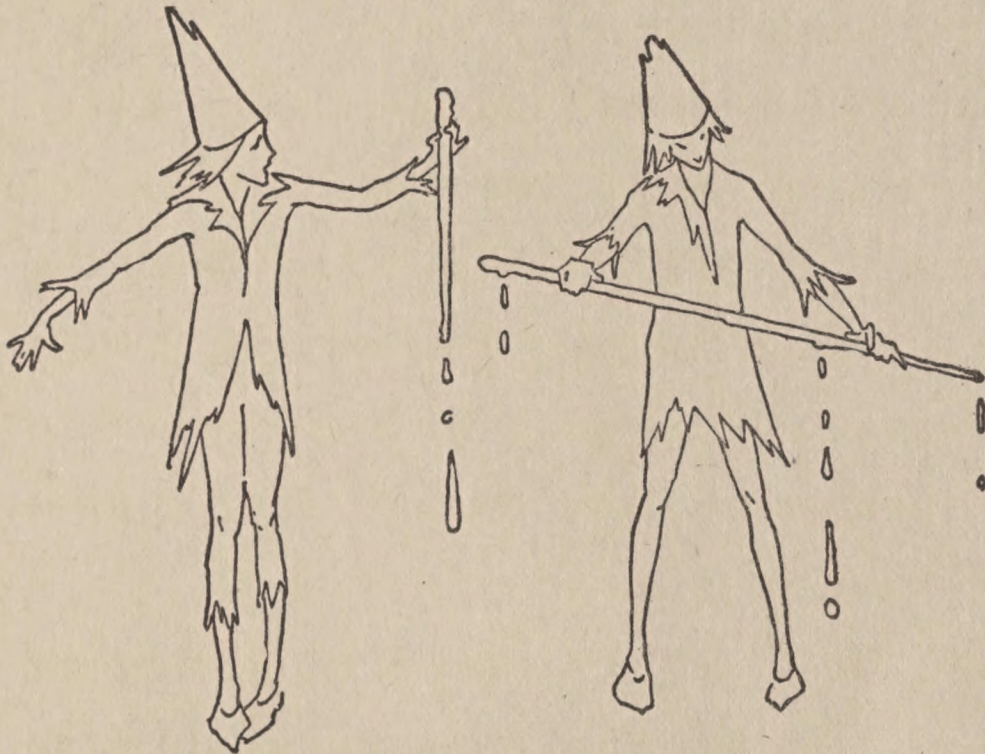
And what do you think happened? Every little ice spear melted away, and the ice elves had nothing to fight with. And then the fluffy dresses of the snow fairies began to turn into water, and the poor little things had to hide themselves away because their clothes would soon be gone.

Jack Frost was furious. But he did not dare go near the Sun, or he too would have suffered from melting. So he gathered his people together and sent them all packing back to their home in the North.

As they went the Sun laughed, and then

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Jack Frost cried angrily, "You wait, Master Sun. Grandfather Winter is coming, and then you and he can settle this matter yourselves."



IN
GRANDFATHER
WINTER'S
REIGN







THE FAIRIES' "FIRST AID" TO SANTA CLAUS

SANTA CLAUS put on his big fur overcoat and jumped into his sleigh. He shouted to his eight reindeer and the sled ran lightly over the ice away from the North Pole.

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Down in the old Eagle's Cave a band of fairy housekeepers were eagerly waiting for Santa Claus to come. The gnomes had dragged in hundreds of Christmas trees, and were trying to trim some of them with bits of bright tinsel which they found in Santa Claus's workroom.

"Well, well, well," cried the jolly old fellow. "Here we are in spite of those naughty ice elves. But where's the Rabbit?" he asked suddenly.

"He'll be here," spoke up a fairy. "So will Gray Goose and the Wild Turkey and the Owl."

"That's fine," said Santa. "Now we'll get right to work. Here are dolls to be painted and dressed, and sleds to be put together, and tree ornaments to make."

With that each fairy was given something

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to do. The little sewing fairies got out their pine needles and stitched busily away. The boy fairies found hammers of tree knots and worked willingly on the beautiful sleds. The tree elves and the wind fairies tossed together odd scraps of moon-silver and made wonderful things to hang on the trees.

"Let's each put a wish on our toys," one small fairy suggested.

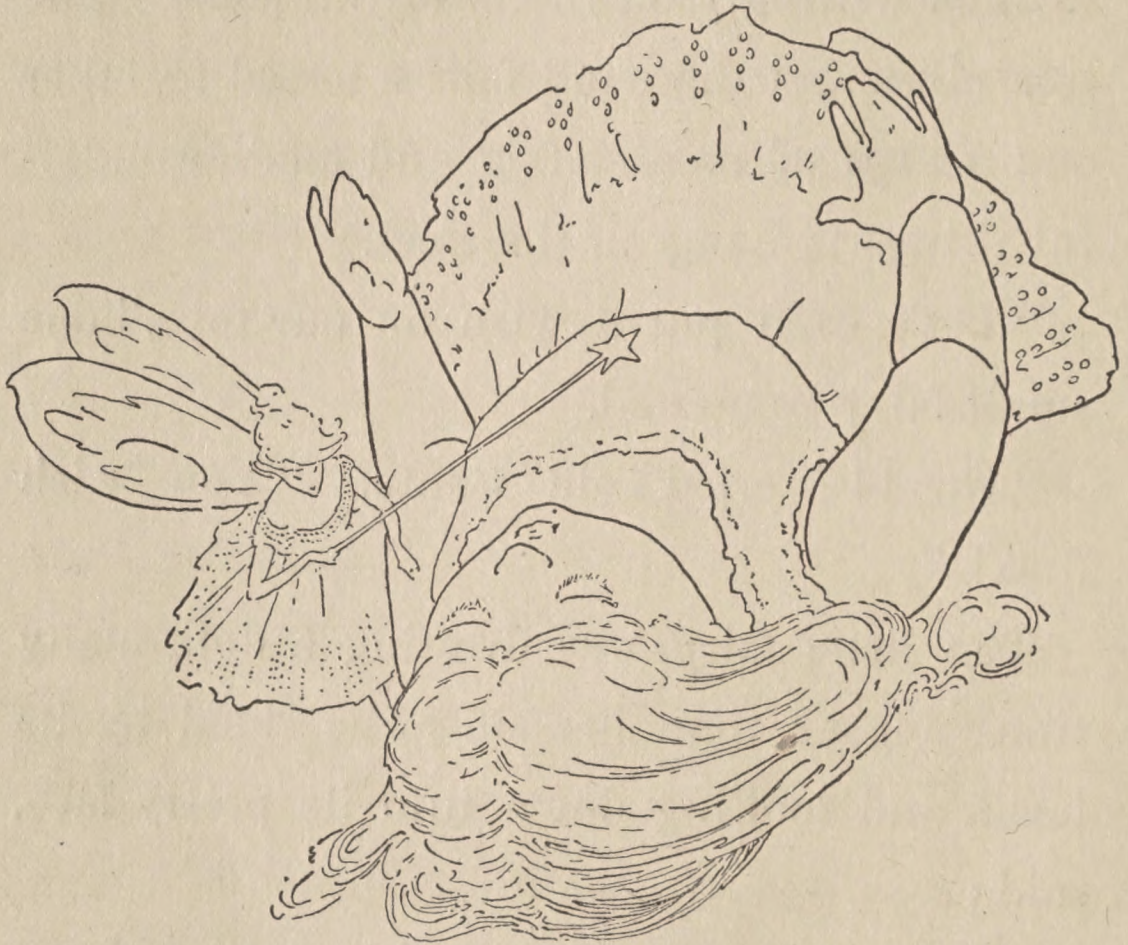
"Good!" cried old Santa. "You wish first!"

The little fairy was dressing a doll, many times bigger than herself. She stood by its head, and looking down into its pretty face, said:

"My wish will be that this dolly goes to some pink-cheeked, blue-eyed, flaxen-haired little girl, with a loving heart. I wish that the love which she has for her dolly will one

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day grow into a wonderful mother-love, and that she shall have a little girl of her own as sweetly perfect as this toy baby."



"The Little Fairy Was Dressing a Doll."

"Good indeed," commented Santa Claus.
"You are a good little fairy."

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Then one of the elves at work on a sled began :

“ I hope that the lad who gets this sled will be a boy all his life. I wish him a young heart, so that he will never know what it is to feel old and cranky and tired of life.”

And so the fairies and the elves wished on, while they worked for the good boys and girls who would soon receive all these wonderful gifts from Santa Claus.

“ You are fine little workers, all of you,” said Santa Claus. “ And I’m going to give you all a reward when I make my visits on Christmas Eve. I’m going to take as many of you as can hold on in my sleigh, and you can see for yourselves some of the children for whom you have been making presents.”

That was how it came about that on Christmas Eve many a boy and girl dreamed of a

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fairy visitor who kissed his or her cheek and whispered "Merry Christmas" in their ears.

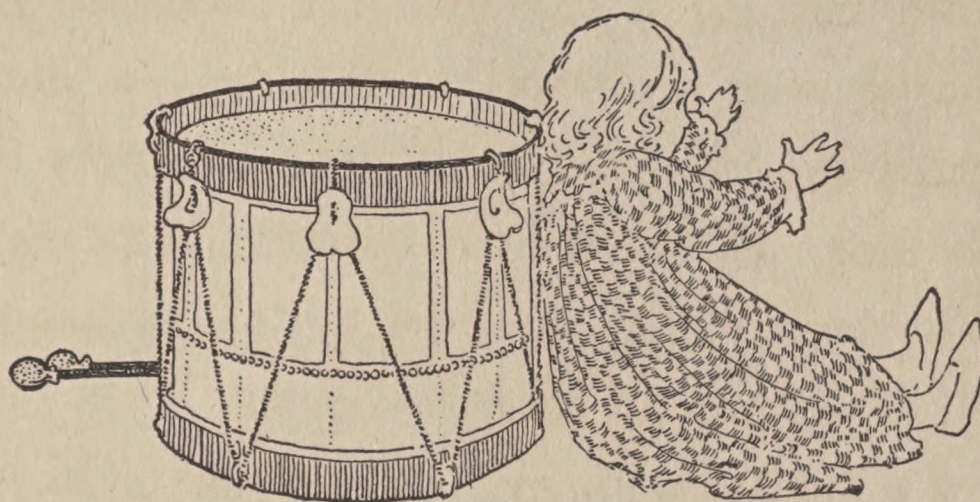
And one little fairy got lost. She found herself tucked away in a stocking and she could not make any one hear her. So she finally went to sleep, and when the child whose stocking she was in came to empty the stocking out tumbled the fairy. But she ran away so quickly that the little girl caught only a glimpse of her.

"It was a real fairy," she insisted, however, when her brothers and sisters laughed at her. "And she's left her little cap," she exclaimed triumphantly.

Sure enough, there was the tiny peaked cap made out of a red leaf. The little girl kept it all her life and told her children how one time a very wonderful thing happened to her—for a fairy was hidden by Santa Claus in

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her stocking. And that's how the children knew that the fairies came visiting with Santa.





WHEN OLD WINTER ARRIVES

“**W**E'RE going to have a white Christmas, after all,” Father John said to Mother Mary.

“How nice!” exclaimed the little mother. “Now Jack can use his sled and his rubber boots, and Helen can try the new pony in the sleigh.”

Sure enough, at the very last moment, when Santa Claus was all through giving out

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his gifts, old Grandfather Winter suddenly got up out of his great armchair and stamped his feet in a temper.

“Christmas and no snow! It’s all wrong; it’s outrageous! That Santa Claus brother of mine always tries to make me have a green Christmas. I will not do it again. Come here,” he shouted to Jack Frost, who was busy drilling the ice elves before the door of the big mountain house.

“Yes?” asked Jack.

“Gather together these people of yours and get out the cloud-ships. I’m going into the world and let the folks there know that I’m still alive!”

“But your rheumatism, father?” Jack Frost ventured to say.

“I haven’t any rheumatism!” old Winter shouted. “Where’s that telephone?”

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"I'll call for you," offered Jack.

"Get the North Wind and the East Wind and then the Cloudshed. Tell the Winds I want them to go out and set the trees tossing and the clouds rolling. I'm coming in my big ship and you are coming in yours, and we're bringing our whole army. Then tell the Sun that he'd better take a few days' vacation, and call up Mother Nature and tell her to put her fairy children away out of sight. I don't want any battles or war. Let them all go to sleep in peace while we show the world a few of the things old Winter can still do."

When Mother Nature got the message, she sent for all the fairy housekeepers that were still with her.

"My children," she said, "Grandfather Winter is coming to-morrow. He's bringing all the ice elves in his kingdom and a whole

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host of snow people. But we are not to fight. I want you all to go quietly to your little nests in the woods and along the rivers and tuck yourselves up for a good sleep. When I need you again I will come and wake you up or send somebody to call you. Keep yourselves warm, for we shall have a cold, dreary world for a while."

So the little fairies and their companions, the elves, scattered among the trees and the shrubs, and climbed under the rocks, and built camping-places beneath the fences. And they drew their blankets of moss and dry leaves around them and went off to sleep like good, obedient children.

Then Mother Nature spoke to the South Wind:

"I want you to blow up a great pile of leaves before the door where Queen Spring is

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sleeping. The cold must not get into her cave. One day I suppose Jack Frost will find her, and then she will wake, but that must not be too soon. I count on you to protect her."

The South Wind was only too glad to do as his mother wished and his soft brushing together of leaves made sweet music under the tall cliff.

Mother Nature went back to her cave and called to the Rain to come and put out her fire. He came in a hurry.

"I must be quick," he said. "If old Winter catches me he'll lock me up behind walls of ice and there's no telling how long it will be before I shall be free again."

But soon the fire was out, and Mother Nature was standing by her door in a great coat of bearskin. Even as she stood there

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“ Mother Nature Was Standing by Her Door in a
Great Coat of Bearskin.”

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she could hear the loud laughter of her noisy sons, the East and the North Winds, coming nearer.

Gradually the sky grew darker, and then she saw a great mass of clouds dropping lower and lower. She shivered, for it seemed to be very cold.

Suddenly Grandfather Winter stood beside her.

"Good-day," he said, gruffly. Winter meant to be kind, but his voice was very rough. "And how is Dame Nature?" he asked, trying to be polite.

"Very well," answered Nature. "Come in and rest after your journey."

To tell the truth Winter was already tired. He had started out with such energy that he was wearing himself out.

"Where's that son of mine?" he shouted.

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"Here I am," spoke up Jack Frost.

"Well, while I rest, you get together a big snow-storm—I want a regular blizzard, mind you."

"But father, this is Christmas Day. A blizzard may not be pleasing to the people of the world."

"There shall be a blizzard, I tell you," the old man commanded. "A big, old-fashioned blizzard. Freeze up every pond and river and build great snowdrifts. The boys and girls will like it," he laughed gleefully.

So Jack Frost made a really, truly blizzard, and people looked out of their windows and wondered how they would ever be able to get about.

But the boys had a glorious time. They took their new sleds and coasted through

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the thickly flying snow ; they made great stacks of snowballs and had merry snow battles. And when the snow had stopped falling, the older boys and girls put on their skates and had gay parties on the ice-bound streams.

The ice elves hung all the trees in the woods with long beautiful ice spears, and the snow fairies spread a white carpet of soft, pure snow all over the ground. Underneath this carpet the fairy sleepers dreamed on, remembering in their dreams the wonderful coronation day of Spring, the fun that they had at the May-Party, and the good things which appeared after the wedding of the Summer to the Spring.

Back in the wind cave Grandfather Winter dozed by the empty fireplace. Mother Nature sat beside him and wondered how long

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he would stay. For dear Mother Nature really loves and enjoys the reigns of the Spring and the Summer much better than she loves the time during which Winter is King.

Suddenly she heard a jolly voice speaking.

“Hello, where is every one?”

And there was the Sun, as merry as ever, turning the white world to a land of rainbow colors and sparkling gems as he threw out his rays over the snow.

“Grandfather Winter is sleeping,” said Dame Nature.

“Why not gather him up and send him back to his own home?” suggested the Sun.

Just then Jack Frost came up.

“Go away, Master Sun,” he cried gaily.

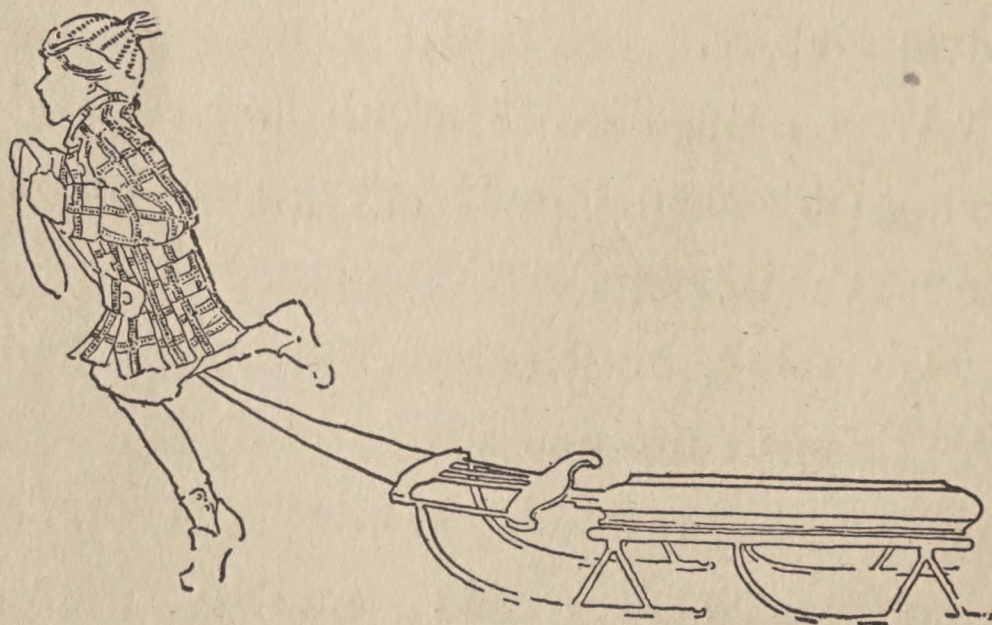
“Don’t spoil my new white suit.”

When he saw old Winter sleeping, he called the North Wind:

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“Pick him up and take him home. He’s all tired out, poor soul. I’ll run this Winter Kingdom.”

Thereupon Grandfather Winter was carefully carried home on the North Wind’s broad wings. And Jack Frost had a merry reign, in which the ice elves and the snow fairies became really friendly with the children, and even the old Sun was willing to let them alone—for a while, at least.





A BIRD STORY

TWO little birds sat on the branch of an elm-tree, and gossiped together. One little bird had just flown up from the South. The other little bird had been looking around to see what signs there might be of the early arrival of Spring.

Said the Lady-Bird :

“ I found the cave in which Queen Spring has been lying through the Winter. There’s a green elf there who told me that Jack Frost

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and the South Wind had quite a battle the other day."

"So the South Wind is still in love with the Spring?" asked the little Man-Bird.

"Oh, my, yes. They say that he never leaves the neighborhood of the cave unless Mother Nature actually sends for him."

"What happened to Jack Frost?"

"Well, you see, there is a story that the Spring cannot come back to life unless the Frost kisses her. Jack Frost has been looking all over this part of the world for the place where they put the Queen when she died. An old, old fairy, who lives under a big rock not far from the sea, told Jack Frost that he must find the Spring before he could go home. And old Winter has been sending every sort of message to Jack Frost to come back North again. Winter has been ill, and

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he wants his son to attend to some business for him. Jack Frost knows that nobody cares much how soon he goes away, for people don't like the Winter, and they think that the ice elves and the snow fairies have done enough mischief as it is.

"So Jack Frost went to Mother Nature and asked where he could find Spring. But Mother Nature would not tell him. She said that he would have to find Spring himself, or the charm would not work. As a matter of fact, Mother Nature herself may not know where the Spring goes after she wakes.

"So Jack went out and gathered together his ice elves, and together they made a thorough search.

"One day Jack Frost met the South Wind.

"'Do you know where Spring is?' Jack asked.

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“ ‘Why do you wish to know?’ the South Wind questioned.

“ ‘I want to see her.’

“ But the South Wind only laughed and seemed to think that he had a good joke on Jack Frost.

“ After that Jack Frost had the South Wind followed, and in this way he found the cave. When the South Wind went off on an errand Jack Frost went into the cave. He found the Spring, and I guess that she must have looked very sweet. For the green elf says that Jack fell right down on his knees beside her couch and caught her up in his arms, and kissed her. Just then the South Wind came back, and when he saw Spring opening her eyes as Jack Frost held her, he was so angry that he blew a great whiff of warm breeze right in Jack Frost’s face. Now you

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know Jack Frost can't stand anything warm, and he lost all his strength in an instant. The South Wind simply chased him away from the cave, and poor Jack was found by a band of ice elves lying down among the trees, unable even to walk. The ice elves picked him up and carried him until his strength came back. But he sent Mother Nature word that he was off for the North Pole and wouldn't be back for a long while. That was when we had the big thaw."

"Where did the Spring go?"

"Nobody knows. The elf said that the West Wind took her up on his great wings and flew away with her. When I went back to the cave there was a band of wood gnomes scattering the dead leaves that were piled up to make a couch for the Spring."

"That looks as if Spring might come back

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to the world rather soon," said the other little bird reflectively.

"I think she will. Only, of course, Mother Nature will have to get the housekeeper fairies busy first."

"How long have the flower and leaf fairies been asleep?"

"Oh, they've been wrapped up in their blankets for several months. The wood gnomes and the tree elves have done all the work that has been done lately in the woods and the fields. They don't mind the cold; and they do not require much sleep. It's the baby fairies that were hidden away in the buds that must grow a little larger before they are ready to come out and take up their share of the work. Mother Nature will let a great many of the older housekeeper fairies rest this year. She's making up some nice

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little homes in the smaller shore caves where they can put together materials for the other fairies to use."

"I have often wondered what becomes of the fairies who no longer help with the housekeeping work. Each year there are so many new fairies that Mother Nature must have a hard time knowing what to do with those whose places are filled by younger fairies."

"Well, I asked the Owl one time about that, and he said that a fairy only lives for a few years. The baby fairies are nursed in the flower and leaf buds; then they have a year or two of fine strength. That is when they are of real use to Mother Nature. But after that they begin to get tired and a little faded, and presently they curl up, and the winds carry them away. Where, I don't know, but

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I suppose they must just drift away into space finally."

"Well, I think I'd rather be a bird than a fairy, anyway," the other little bird announced in conclusion.

After that both little birds were quiet for a while. The Man-Bird smoothed his feathers carefully, and the Lady-Bird stole shy little peeps at her companion.

At last the little Man-Bird said :

"I know where there's a fine place for a nest up in this tree."

"Do you?" asked the Lady-Bird.

"Do you like me?" said the little Man-Bird, a bit suddenly.

"Do you like me?" the Lady-Bird twittered.

"I like you better than any little bird I have ever seen," declared the Man-Bird.

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“And I think you’re quite the handsomest bird I have seen,” responded the little Lady-Bird.

“Let’s build a nest up in the tree,” suggested the little Man-Bird.

“I think I’d like to,” answered the Lady-Bird.

So it happened that a squirrel, frisking around the old elm-tree some weeks later, heard funny little squeaks. He looked up and saw a birds’ nest, and when he peeped over the side, there was a dainty little Lady-Bird in the nest, with three tiny baby birds beside her.

“Do tell me what’s happening in the world,” said the Lady-Bird. “My husband is a dear, good man, but he doesn’t bring me much news.”

“Well,” said the squirrel, “yesterday we

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heard that the Spring was having her new dress made. Mother Nature is getting ready to wake up the fairies once more."

"I'm so glad," murmured the little Lady-Bird. "I'm hoping that my babies will soon be big enough to help pull the Queen Spring's coronation car. It's my highest ambition for them," she sighed.





"I AM only a little housekeeper fairy. But I want the boys and girls to know one of us by name. My name is Windflower, because I stay most of the time with the winds when they work and play among the flowers. I am just two years old. I woke to life in a spring leaf-bud, and when Mother Nature sent the Spring with her magic wand into the woods, the leaf-bud in which I lay burst open. My first bath was in a pool of sunshine, and my first meal was a drop of arbutus dew.

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“In my first Spring kingdom I worked among the flowers with a lot of other fairies. In the Summer kingdom I brushed the fields and dried the grain after thunder-storms. When Autumn came, I aided in blowing the leaves off the trees, and when the news arrived that Jack Frost had started travelling, I rolled myself under the shadows of the cave where Spring slept.

“In my second year I helped to make the Spring Queen’s dress. Then I blew perfume into roses and honeysuckle. In the Autumn I shined nuts, and I fell asleep under a great pile of dead leaves down by the river.

“A few days ago something woke me. I think that it was the chirp of a bird. As soon as I had scrambled out of my leaf blankets I saw that the world was being made fresh and green. But Mother Nature

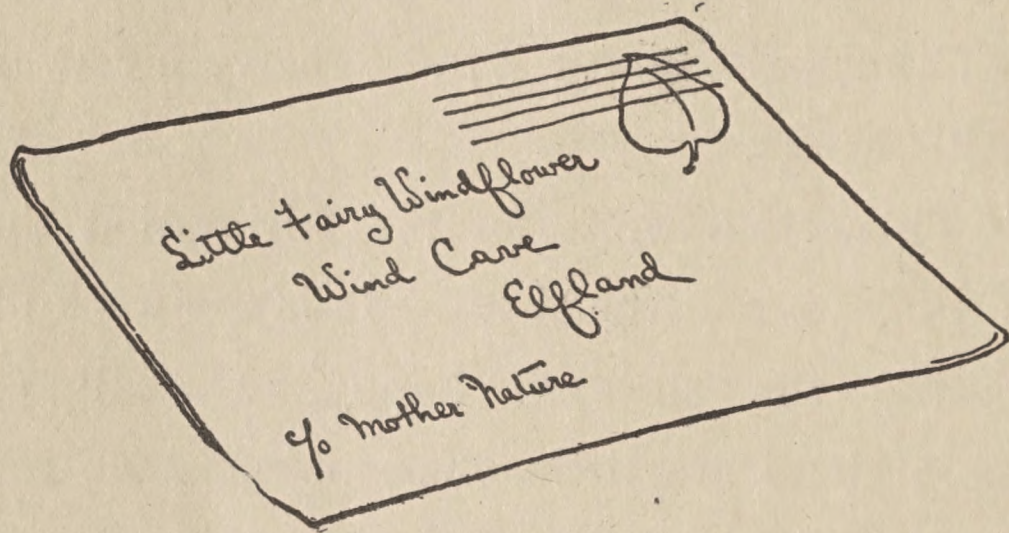
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has not sent for me, and so I know that this year I shall do no housekeeping. I am making myself a new green dress, and soon I shall go down to the wind cave. Perhaps Mother Nature will let me help her to spin. If not I shall ask the South Wind to carry me away on his wings.

“There is a work for the fairies that the world knows little about. It is the work of making the children happy. I shall go where there are little ones, and Mother Nature will let me stay as long as life lasts. I want to find a good little boy or girl who loves fairies and fairy stories. Maybe you know some one like this. If you do, please send me a letter to Fairy-land right away, before the South Wind comes around. I'll follow the directions you send. If you never hear from me again you will know that I am

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keeping watch over some baby, or that I have sailed off to the clouds to live with some of the other fairies up in the rainbow."







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